

# The Freeman

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## CURRENT COMMENT.

EVERYBODY who can wield a pen, apparently, is predicting what will happen from the formal registration of disagreement between the French and British Governments. Regular correspondents, special correspondents and editorial writers have been exuding literature on the subject at a terrific rate this week. We do not feel justified in adding to the flood, because, frankly, we have no idea of what is going to happen. We suspect, as we said last week, that there is really no very profound misunderstanding between M. Poincaré and Mr. Bonar Law. Probably Mr. Law has handed his French colleague the gold brick of a free fist in Germany in return for the equally insubstantial gift of free fingers on the oil-fields of Mosul. If M. Poincaré trots his motley flock of blacks, tans, umbers, ochres and gamboges into the Ruhr, he will not, in the long run, make mule-feed on his investment; and Mr. Law can not exploit Mosul without a fine large rumpus with the Turks, to which Mr. Law's people are by no means minded. All we can see at present is that Mr. Law has exercised the Englishman's unerring instinct for ranging himself on the side of morality and righteousness. If M. Poincaré grabs the Ruhr, his colleague and late ally can, and probably will, make the welkin resound with groans of disapprobation; but this, no doubt, is all that he will do, since it is all that he needs to do to make good his position in the ranks of the upright.

NOR do we expect to see Mr. Harding's Administration make any very energetic motions for the relief of Germany. Possibly, and we think probably, American interests have been offered a look-in on the oil-fields of Mosul, and if that be the case, it would suffice to keep Mr. Hughes quiet. The few American soldiers may be ostentatiously recalled from the zone of occupation, and this will be enough for journalism to construe into a "stinging rebuke" to French militaristic arrogance. We ourselves do not, however, expect to see M. Poincaré do anything so foolish as to seize the Ruhr district. We hope he will, as we have all along hoped he would, just because it would be an act of such conspicuous and criminal folly as to bring matters to a head. Four years of threats and sham, bluster and bluff, are quite all that is necessary;

and anything that will bring the international situation down to cases is immensely desirable. It is quite as desirable for Germany itself as for the rest of the world.

THERE are in the international situation, it must be remembered, two sets of conflicting interests. They are the interests of exploitation, on the one hand, and, on the other, the interests of legitimate industry and commerce. Industry and commerce would thrive best in England if Germany were put on her feet and became once more, as soon as possible, a good, solvent customer. So, too, would the same interests thrive best in the United States and France. The interests of predatory exploitation, however, thrive best—or think they do—upon such deals as we suspect have been entered into by M. Poincaré and Mr. Bonar Law; such deals, for instance, as were entered into by the British, French and Spanish Governments over Morocco. The trouble is that Governments always represent the latter set of interests, never the former. Mr. Bonar Law does not represent the interests of British industry and commerce; his first care is for British economic imperialism, e. g., at Mosul. M. Poincaré represents the interests of those Frenchmen who, as Mr. Henry L. Mencken said, find it easier to get money with the sword than with the shovel, e. g., in the Ruhr; and Mr. Hughes's allegiance to these interests is so whole-souled that he has never given evidence of knowing that there are any others in the world. Thus it is that in a crisis of this kind, the interests of industry and commerce go so far by the board that there is little use in letting them figure in one's calculations. What industry and commerce need, naturally, is for as many people as possible in all countries to resume work and trade; but among politicians, this does not count.

ACCORDING to an address printed in a newspaper that comes to us from Tacoma, Washington, Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver H. Dockery of Mr. Harding's military establishment has been dangling before the American Legion the heroic example of the Italian Fascisti, and has been telling the Legionaries that the time may be approaching when they will be called upon to play the Fascist rôle here in the United States. Colonel Dockery apparently did not believe that it was necessary for the Legionaries to "march on to Washington" immediately, but he advised the boys to get busy with black-shirt tactics in their respective communities. In proof of the need for such effort, this warrior-statesman pointed out that an alarming number of candidates with whom he is not in agreement were successful at the recent election, and declared that the results at the polls had caused "great rejoicing in Moscow." In the course of his argument Colonel Dockery gave his patriotic audiences some glimpses of recent Russian history which, as examples of pure romance, indicated his remarkable mental qualities. We were uncertain whether to admire more his character-sketch of the noble, great-hearted Tsar, undermined by Bolshevik plotting, or his description of how Lenin and Trotzky sent over to our shores "a primitive brute named Czolgosz to murder our beloved President McKinley." It would be interesting to know how many



officers in the American army have had their ambitions stimulated by the daring success of Signor Mussolini, and how many are openly advocating the application of black-shirt methods of force and violence for the overthrow of American electoral institutions.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS does not generally register itself in favour of arrangements for a freer importation of commodities. In regard, however, to importations of the raw material called labour, its attitude is much more liberal. Declaring that American prosperity is menaced by "the present emergency of depleted labour caused by the restrictions of the three per cent immigration-law," the Association has prepared for Congress a programme designed to admit a greater number of alien workers, with rigid restrictions to limit the newcomers strictly to "hands" of the servile type. Thus the Association favours casting aside anything in the nature of a literacy-test, but insists on the strictest sort of qualifications to determine "the mental, moral and political quality of prospective newcomers." A political board is to apply these delicate tests of eligibility. The Association also demands "that the United States assert the right to register, distribute, educate and otherwise supervise the alien during his period of alienage," presumably with the idea of preparing him for full citizenship in our land of the free. Though the Association states that its programme has been in preparation for two years, it seems to us that a conspicuously effective provision for sub-humanizing the alien has been omitted. Surely we need a board of psychologists and surgeons to greet incomers hospitably and, through certain cerebral excisions, deftly to relieve them of all their brain-centres save those related to the will-to-work.

THERE is a certain discrepancy between the lamentations of these manufacturers over the sorry depletion of our labour-forces and the statements of the Department of Labour that there are still a million and a half persons in the United States unable to find work. Our neighbour the *New York World* recently offered a shrewd explanation of this puzzle. The labour-shortage here, according to the *World*, is really a shortage of alien labour, not of the native product, and it exists primarily in the eyes of canny manufacturers who "prefer the workman who has not been acclimatized, who hasn't picked up too many American living-standards or too much of the language." In other words, among short-sighted employers, the idea of the robot is making a great appeal. This seems a plausible suggestion, and we are glad to pass it along to our readers for what it is worth. The trouble with this idea is that the further it is carried, the more it will impair the quality of American citizenship and production.

WITH more regard for conscience than for the letter of the law, an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury at Washington has ruled that imports which were put on the free list by the Cuban-American treaty of 1897 are not dutiable under the terms of the Fordney-McCumber tariff-law. The new schedule makes no special mention of imports from Cuba; it plasters on its duties indiscriminately, and our friend at the Treasury was therefore obliged to decide whether or not the general act of Congress involved the repudiation of a specific international obligation. The decision as rendered shows some regard for the sacredness and inviolability of treaties, but the editor of the *New York Times* holds that a mistake has been made. With his usual high regard for the national honour, he recalls the fact that in 1880 the Congress abrogated certain portions of the Chinese-American treaty, without the consent of the weaker party. This sort of thing, the editor

says, is Constitutional, and no doubt he is right. On the other hand, in view of his sensitiveness to a similar offence on the part of a certain foreign Government, it seems strange that he did not wind up his editorial with a stickful of platitudes about "scraps of paper."

THE papers say that the cotton-manufacturers of New England are submitting in increasing numbers to the seductions of the South. Low taxes, low wages, and long hours of work are said to be the chief attractions at the present time, but as new plants are established in the Southern States, there will be a tendency towards equalization in these matters. In competition with the older mills in this country, the Southern plants will, however, enjoy one permanent natural advantage; that is, they will be relieved of the shipping-costs involved in transporting raw cotton to New England, and distributing the finished product from that remote corner of the United States. If the South were a foreign country, the mills in New England could be maintained indefinitely in their disadvantageous location, with the aid of a protective tariff; but since there are no customs-houses along the Potomac, it looks as though the business of cotton-manufacture might eventually get itself re-located, without interference from the politicians and with some regard for economic law.

AFTER an unaccountable delay of three days, our Southern friends opened this year's race-war on 4 January, with a sizable skirmish at Rosewood, Florida. In the course of the proceedings, two white men and some Negroes were killed, the blacks who survived were driven into the woods, and most of the houses in the Negro quarter were burned. The trouble seems to have originated in an attempt on the part of the whites to search the black quarter for an escaped Negro convict, who was accused of having attacked a white girl. The Negroes resisted, and in the course of the fight which followed, a number of people were killed and wounded. For example, the Associated Press says it is reported that "Lesty Gordon, a Negro woman [not a Belgian, or an Armenian] was shot to death as she was leaving her burning dwelling." A sardonic twist is given to the whole story by the statement that the escaped convict was serving a sentence for carrying concealed weapons. How strange it is that he should have armed himself, instead of putting his trust in law-'n-order!

In his message to the new State Legislature of New York, Governor Smith delivered himself with commendable emphasis of certain observations on the subject of personal liberty. He pointed out that censorship, espionage and control of opinion are incompatible with any reasonable conception of democracy. Having laid down this postulate, he called for the repeal of the law for the censorship of motion-pictures, and of those medieval statutes fathered by Senator Lusk, which were designed to purge the State's educational system of any trace of enlightenment and make it an agency for the propaganda of servility, mendacity and hypocrisy after the best Tsarist manner.

THIS portion of Governor Smith's message was refreshing; yet curiously enough, he made no mention of a repeal of what is by far the most obnoxious statute that emanated from the Luskian debauch. We refer, of course, to the State's criminal-anarchy law, under which any citizen who holds in serious regard the political opinions of Thomas Jefferson, or who incautiously expresses sentiments similar to some of those voiced by Abraham Lincoln in his first inaugural address, is eligible for a long term in prison. It is possible that the new Governor has forgotten or is unaware of this political



monstrosity. If he desires some first-hand information on the law and its workings, he can easily secure it from a distinguished foreigner who, as it happens, is now residing in the State as an involuntary guest of Mr. Smith's Government. This gentleman is Mr. James Larkin, whose opinions, which won him such a large following and such a generous measure of devotion among the Irish people, earned for him a term of ten years imprisonment under our free institutions in New York. If Governor Smith has never heard of Mr. Larkin, we suggest that he dip into any history of modern Ireland; or, if such serious literature is not available, we are confident that many of the Governor's old neighbours on Oliver Street would be glad to enlighten him concerning the position and character of this eminent Irishman.

A DISPATCH from Budapest brings the news that there is a good deal of sentiment in Hungary in favour of an alliance with Austria. "It is felt here," says the dispatch, "that there should be closer co-operation between the two States of the old Dual Monarchy, in view of what is believed to be the little Entente's menace of intervention." We are inclined to believe that the menace of the little Entente plays a very small part in this reported agitation for an alliance, and that economic considerations play a very large one. The old Austrian Empire may have been racially monstrous, but economically it was logical, for its various sections were economically interdependent. Hungary is an agricultural country; Austria is industrial. The advantage that would accrue to both from free economic interchange, is self-evident. But we can not see that any sort of political alliance is necessary to bring about this condition; if the two Governments really want to stimulate an exchange of products, let them abolish their tariffs. Their peoples can be depended upon to do the rest.

By a vote of two to one, the All-Indian National Congress, in session at Gaya, has decided to hold fast to Gandhi's programme of peaceful non-coöperation. The method of Gandhi's followers, as we understand it, is something like that of the English merchants and manufacturers who threatened, in 1831, to stop paying taxes unless the Reform Bill were passed. These well-to-do Englishmen wanted to try their hand at parliamentary government, but the Indian non-coöperators are not interested, apparently, in that sort of thing. Instead of raising a cry for the extension of the franchise, they have refused to make use of the limited political privileges granted by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, and have decided to boycott the coming elections for the Legislative Councils. The Gandhians seem to contemplate the demolition of the Government, rather than its capture, and for such a purpose, their method of procedure is unquestionably the most effective that can be employed. The constructive phase of the movement has not been very well advertised, but if the ancient autonomous village-communities of India are to be the basis and the model for social reorganization, then the development of co-operative economic activity among the people is at least as important as withdrawal from co-operation with the Government.

For the man who wants to know what the natives of the Dark Continent are learning from their masters, Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones's report on "Education in Africa," recently published by the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York City, is not an altogether adequate compendium of information. Dr. Jones and the other investigators who went with him to Africa were interested in "education," as conventionally defined, and it was natural that they should not give much attention to military training. We do not mention this omission in any unfriendly spirit, for

we realize that the field of research had necessarily to be limited in some fashion, and we believe, too, that the report as it stands is a document of very considerable value. On the other hand, it would be just as well if the readers who make use of this book, and the editorial-writers who comment upon it, would glance also at Mr. E. D. Morel's volume on "The Black Man's Burden." To be sure, the Africans are being civilized and Christianized, after a fashion, but they are also being militarized, and it still remains to be seen which type of instruction will prove the more effective.

IN quality, the Fascist Government at Rome may be as bad as any, but it begins to look as though there might be some relief in the matter of quantity. One dispatch says that Signor Mussolini is about to go after the bureaucracy with his emblematic ax, while another cablegram quotes the Premier's brother to the effect that free trade will presently be established in Italy. This is joyous news, whether it is true or not, for at least it gives evidence of a hopeful interest in measures that look towards freedom. The Fascisti are a rough and ready crew, and nobody has less liking for their methods than we. On the other hand, as between a misrepresentative Government with a trade-choking policy, and a non-representative Government which actually established freedom of trade, we should certainly have no trouble in deciding which constituted the more effective tyranny.

WITH the columns of the *New Republic* as their field of action, Mr. Walter Lippmann and Professor Lewis M. Terman have engaged recently in an acrimonious debate on the subject of the measurement of intelligence. In his latest contribution, Mr. Lippmann admits that in his own mind, this subject is involved in an "emotional complex." He says, "I hate the impudence of a claim that in fifty minutes you can judge and classify a human being's predestined fitness in life. I hate the pretentiousness of that claim, I hate the abuse of scientific method which it involves. I hate the sense of superiority which it creates, and the sense of inferiority which it imposes." This is strong language, but it seems to us that Professor Terman and his friends had it coming. Our own interest centres in the increase of opportunity, rather than in any scheme for rationing the individual according to his capacities. If the tests could be depended upon to yield a perfectly accurate measure of individual intelligence, it would not necessarily follow, even then, that those who had been weighed in the psychologist's balance and found wanting should be restricted in respect to educational opportunity. For our own part, we should decline to accept such a paternal system of regimentation, even if it were based on calculations as accurate as those of higher mathematics.

By a most unfortunate error, the article "Sins of Omission" in our last issue was accredited to Mr. Carl Dreher instead of to Mr. William C. Dreher. We are much ashamed of this piece of carelessness, and beg both gentlemen and our readers to accept our acknowledgments and apologies.

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## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

### A HAIR OF THE DOG.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY apparently believes in the old wives' prescription for healing a dog's bite. In his proposal of a Constitutional amendment to permit the taxation of income from securities which are now exempt, he gravely—for we must in courtesy assume that he does it with a straight face—hands out to the taxpayers a hair of the dog that has bitten them. He is proposing a new Constitutional amendment to repair the damages caused by another Constitutional amendment. Constitutional amendments are much like the international conferences that have had such a run of popularity during the past four years. They represent the politician's way of dealing with domestic iniquities, as the conference represented his way of dealing with international iniquities. The politician wished to make people think that something was going to be done to settle international questions which he very well knew he was powerless to settle and which he had no notion of settling and really did not wish to settle; so he organized conference after conference, and went hopping about the world from Paris to London and Cannes and Brussels and Washington and Genoa and back again, to keep the public's expectations on tenterhooks. Similarly, to allay discontent with the monstrously unfair distribution of the burden of domestic taxation, the Constitution was amended to permit the levying of an income-tax. The measure was hailed by the liberals, progressives, forward-lookers, and the rest of that ilk which is recruited, according to the late P. T. Barnum, at the rate of one per minute; but aside from these, no one in his right mind ever dreamed that the income-tax would redistribute the burden of taxation one jot more equitably, or that the politician ever intended that it should do so.

The income-tax is paid by the poor, quite as the politician meant it should be; and it will always be paid by the poor. Well-to-do persons pay something, but the burden is scandalously disproportionate. In 1916, for instance, there were in the country more than two hundred persons who paid an income-tax on a million dollars or more; and in 1920 there were only thirty-three! The very rich have dodged the tax. Probably not over four per cent of farmers in the United States pay an income-tax; and there is no means known to man whereby a farmer can be compelled to pay an income-tax. Those who work for wages or salaries, or who get royalties or commissions, can be, and are, checked up; but a farmer can not be checked up. Stock dividends are not taxable; and the amount of money represented by stock dividends in 1920 is rather more than two billion dollars. When one considers the existing volume of tax-exempt securities, chiefly State, city and county bonds to the value of more than \$18 billion, one can see pretty plainly what the large investor does with his money. Mr. Meyer D. Rothschild writes on the subject as follows:

The startling picture of the decline of taxable incomes of \$300,000 and over presented in *Statistics of Income* for the years ended 31 December, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919 and 1920, is worthy of special consideration in connexion with the subject of tax-free bonds. In 1916 there were 1296 persons in the United States who had enjoyed a taxable income over \$300,000—the total of these incomes was near a billion dollars, of which \$700 million was derived from dividends and interest on investments. Notwithstanding the fact that well-informed business-men do not hesitate to say that they believe there were more incomes over \$300,000 in 1920 than in 1916, the

return of taxable incomes over \$300,000 dropped to 395 in 1920, with a total taxable income of \$246 million, of which \$229 million was derived from dividends and interest on investments. In 1920, 156 persons returned a taxable income of \$156,041,000 on which they paid the Government \$94,826,000 or 60¾ per cent of their entire net taxable income. It will be interesting to study the statistics of income in 1921 to see how many of these 156 persons reached the tax-exempt isle of safety.

That, then, is the upshot of the Constitutional amendment designed to "make the rich take their share of the burden." The rich man whose money is invested in tax-exempt securities goes free; and not only so, but his money so invested is taken out of productive industry and given to State, municipal and county politicians to play ducks and drakes with. Indeed, it is because the Federal income-tax is such a windfall to these gentry that we have great doubts about the success of Mr. Mellon's proposed amendment. We can not see the State legislatures consenting to it, any more than we could see ourselves consenting to it if we were in their place. But suppose the amendment were enacted, ratified and proclaimed, what then? Mr. Rothschild supplies a partial answer to this question:

Assuming that the Constitutional amendment is submitted to the States and is ratified by 1926, there will exist at that time at least \$20 billion of tax-free bonds, unaffected by the amendment. If our present surtaxes continue to that time, persons with very large incomes will gradually acquire the bulk of these twenty billions because they can afford to pay a relatively high premium for them.

As for capital which is not thus employed, it would more and more tend to leave the country, as it is doing even now in increasing volume, under the pressure of our existing fiscal arrangements.

By an interesting coincidence, the newspapers which carry the account of Mr. Mellon's proposal, also mention the formation of a gigantic corporation known as China Enterprises, Inc. This concern's charter, the report says, contemplates "practically all forms of commercial activity." Its capitalization has not been fixed; but that of two subsidiaries, the Universal Textile Corporation and the Dragon Film Corporation, is nine million and five million dollars, respectively; and the plan provides for the formation of other subsidiaries to manufacture such things as glass, pottery and motor-cars. "The manufacturing will be done in China," says the report, "with Chinese labour under American supervision."

Now we suggest that our readers ask themselves why \$14 million of American capital should be exported to China, and why a lot of Americans should move to China in order to supervise Chinese labour in the manufacture of commodities. If this capital can employ itself more profitably in China than it can here, what are the reasons? Why does capital choose the risk and inconvenience of seeking work so far from home? There are many reasons, no doubt, and each one should be conceded its proper weight; but we should like our readers to be sure to give full consideration to two that are not often considered at all. First, our blundering, iniquitous and throttling system of taxation; and, second, the fact that all the natural resources of the United States are monopolized. Capital can not work for the production of wealth except upon natural resources; and if it can not work upon the natural resources of its own country except at a monopoly-price, and can find unmonopolized resources abroad, it must go abroad for its health. If, again, capital works at a disadvantage in point of taxation when it works



at home—if taxation brings its net return (allowing for risk and inconvenience) below its net return when employed abroad—it must pull up stakes and move.

Just thus is bred the thing that we are all talking about—imperialism. Just so long as this enforced exportation of capital goes on, and as its volume increases, just so long will the political policy of imperialism go on and its dangers increase. Every exportation of capital is a practical requisition upon the exporting country for a strengthened military establishment and for a “strong” foreign policy. It seems an extraordinary thing that those who most deprecate imperialism have never a word to say about the economic conditions that render imperialism inevitable. There is no natural reason why a single dollar of American capital should ever be forced out of this country; there was no natural reason why English or German or French capital should have been forced out of those countries. Natural-resource monopoly and iniquitous taxation drove English, German and French capital to seek work away from home, as they are now driving American capital; and, as this paper has often said, China is the object of contention among the capital-exporting nations of this generation, as Morocco was among those of the last.

Mr. Mellon is not likely to get his new Constitutional amendment; yet from one point of view it would be a good thing, for it would go a long way to focus and enhance discontent with our whole system of taxation. When people at large come to feel that any and all taxation upon the products of labour and capital is sheer theft, we shall be in sight of a salutary and far-reaching change. Anything that will promote that feeling should therefore probably be welcomed; and so, if by some miracle Mr. Mellon's proposal should be carried out, its evil effects would not be wholly uncompensated.

### THE USES OF GOVERNMENT.

Do some of our readers feel that we have already had rather too much to say on the subject of the Haitian loan? We rather suspect so, and yet we have just come into possession of a document that is altogether too good to keep. This document is not a rarity; it is a circular published and distributed by the National City Company, to promote the sale of the bonds of the new Haitian issue, and we are therefore co-operating with the company, in a way, when we help to advertise the fact that the imperial American Government has put itself completely at the service of the private creditors of Haiti.

At the very outset, the circular assures the prospective investor that the bonds in question have been issued “with the agreement of the President of the United States in accordance with a treaty of 16 September 1915”; and thereafter an attempt is made to show just what the public support of the Government amounts to, in terms of private advantage to the bondholders. Most of the advertising-matter appears in the form of a letter from the financial adviser of Haiti to the National City Company. According to the adviser, the treaty of 1915 provides that “the Republic of Haiti shall not increase its public debt except by previous agreement with the President of the United States.” Upon the retirement of certain loans now outstanding and presently to be redeemed, the new bonds just issued with the approval of Washington will become a first charge upon the customs-duties and the internal revenues of the Haitian Republic, after allowance has been made for the expenses of

the receiver-general of customs and the financial adviser of the Republic, both of whom are nominated by the President of the United States. The Republic of Haiti is bound by treaty not to “modify the customs-duties in such a manner as to reduce the revenues therefrom,” without the consent of the American Government. On the other hand, if additional funds are needed to meet the service of the public debt, the Government of Haiti is required to co-operate with the American financial adviser in the development of new sources of income.

The National City Company advertises the Haitian loan by quoting these statements of the American financial adviser to prove that the fiscal system of Haiti is under the control of American officials, and can be manipulated for the benefit of American investors. In order to clinch the argument, and to give the prospective bond-buyer a double assurance that the American Government will stick with him, through thick and thin, the Company adds the following on its own account:

A letter from the Secretary of State of the United States is on deposit with the Fiscal Agent of this loan [the National City Bank of New York], which states that it is the intention of the Government of the United States to continue to exercise all the powers conferred upon it by the treaty, the Additional Act and the Protocol, as modified and confirmed by an exchange of notes, with reference to supervision over the finances of Haiti and collection and application through its nominees [the receiver general and the financial adviser] of the revenues of Haiti pledged to the service of its public debt.

This completes the case, as far as the bonds of this series are concerned, but the possibilities of the future still remain to be explored. When the current operations have been completed, the public debt of Haiti will amount to only about \$8.40 *per capita*, and the requirements for the annual service of this debt will come to less than one-third of the average annual income of the Republic for the past six years. When it is remembered also that the Government of Haiti may be required to augment its revenues in order to meet the debt-service, there appears to be no good reason why the bonding and taxing of the Haitians should not be expanded indefinitely.

The people of Haiti might perhaps object to a further increase of their obligations, but the Haiti-Santo-Domingo Independence Society says that in the present instance the loan was put through against popular opposition, by force and fraud. If this has been done once, it can be done again; and the prospect of a handsome profit for the operators makes it likely that it will at least be attempted. The nature of the financial imperialist's motives becomes clear enough when one discovers, by reading the original loan-agreement as published by the Haitian Government, that the bonds which the National City Company is marketing at 96.5 per cent of their par value, were purchased by the company from the Republic of Haiti at 92.137 per cent of par. Since the par value of the issue totals sixteen million dollars, the company probably stands to make a profit of some \$700,000 out of the deal, over and above the expense incurred in the operation. In the circular used to advertise these bonds, it is practically admitted that this sort of financing depends upon political imperialism for its support; and now that this admission has been duly noted, the reader may be left to decide for himself whether or not the impulse to imperial expansion is more likely to originate with the Government, or with the international bankers who expect to make the haul.



### THE CASE OF THE "LUSITANIA."

THE late Collector of the Port of New York has made a perfectly fair declaration of the status of the "Lusitania" when she set forth on her last voyage. Mr. Malone says that to the best of his knowledge, both official and personal, she carried no guns, and no ammunition except such small amounts as came within the ruling established by Secretary Nagel, some years before the war. He says frankly that it was impossible for him, as it would be impossible for anyone in his position, to know the contents of every parcel carried on board the ship. He would probably also admit—though we believe he has not been interrogated on this point—that it would be impracticable for a Collector to search a vessel so thoroughly as to make sure beyond peradventure that a gun was nowhere concealed in it. In this connexion there is a good deal of force in Mr. Malone's statement that he had no more reason to be suspicious of the "Lusitania" than of any other vessel clearing from the port. Mr. Malone appears to us to have done his full duty in the premises, and to have put forth his findings with excellent impartiality.

It is therefore with no disrespect to Mr. Malone and no idea of discrediting his report, that we call attention to the letter of Mr. Winthrop Parkhurst, published in this issue. Mr. Parkhurst brings forward a witness who saw a gun mounted on the "Lusitania's" stern when she passed down the upper bay. When Mr. Parkhurst sent us his letter, we asked him to give us this person's name and satisfactory assurance of his responsibility, and Mr. Parkhurst at once did so. He is a wholly responsible person, grandson of one of New York's most distinguished men; at the time of the incident, he was serving or was about to take service, in the Canadian Royal Flying Forces; and he professes himself ready to stand by his statement whenever called upon to testify in any regularly constituted inquiry. We are therefore glad to publish Mr. Parkhurst's letter, hoping that it may come under the eyes of others who were on the Staten Island ferry-boat with this witness and can give testimony accordingly.

Our own beliefs about the "Lusitania" have always been that she was an armed vessel, and that she carried explosives in excess of the amount exhibited to Mr. Malone, probably through falsification of her papers. We hope that more testimony on these points will be forthcoming. Moreover we believe that the British Government, in its desperate desire to confiscate the sympathy of the American people, deliberately connived at the "Lusitania's" destruction. We base this belief upon the following facts, which have already been brought forward by Mr. Malone: first, that the "Lusitania's" speed was slowed down to twelve knots an hour when she was in the zone of danger, thus offering a practically stationary target for torpedoes; and, second, that her ports were open, and her life-boats swung in and covered. British ships, especially ships like the "Lusitania," are not, as a rule, officered by lunatics or incompetents. The presumption is, therefore, that the "Lusitania's" officers were acting under orders from the Admiralty, and that the Admiralty was acting on the principle which we all remember to have heard cited and approved on every hand, that anything which would help win the war, was justifiable. Otherwise, we can see no reason whatever why half a dozen lives should have been lost from the "Lusitania." If the ship carried no explosives, if the elementary precautions of closing her ports and swinging out her life-boats had been attended to, and if

the flock of destroyers in Queenstown harbour had come to her assistance promptly, instead of staying where they were, we think that the toll of casualties would have been relatively very small.

We are not particularly tenacious of these beliefs; in fact, we should be glad to give them up if competent evidence were offered against them. At present, however, they seem to represent a common-sense view of the incident. It was clearly to the British Government's interest that the "Lusitania" should be sunk, and as spectacularly as possible, for the sake of the moral effect upon the American public; and in this view, her carrying of explosives, if she carried any, and her extraordinary behaviour in the zone of danger, stand accounted for. It was also to the British Government's interest that she should appear to her passengers to be armed; hence if the gun which Mr. Parkhurst's friend says he saw mounted at her stern, were really there—and for all he or we know, it may have been a "Quaker gun"—its presence is accounted for. A just consideration of all the evidence so far adduced, including that of Mr. Malone, inclines us to the beliefs that we have set forth, and we recommend them to our readers to be held tentatively, as we ourselves hold them. The thing needed is more evidence—evidence on all points, great and small; and it is in the hope of eliciting further evidence on one relatively small though not unimportant point—nothing bearing upon the incident is unimportant—that we publish Mr. Parkhurst's letter.

### AMOR FATI.

IN one of his most recent essays, Mr. Santayana speaks of the immense value in the world of thought, in the world of the arts, of a complete indifference to forms of life that are beyond one's power of realization. He is discussing snobs and snobbishness; and he suggests, apropos of the instinct of social emulation, that nothing could be better calculated to advance the material well-being of society: it is in ages and among races in which that instinct is weakest, on the other hand, that we find the most marked variations in the sphere of the intellect. Mr. Santayana cites the Hindus who roll in the dust, rapt in their separate universes, oblivious of the destiny of king or merchant; but we do not need to go to Asia to perceive that, so far as the life of thought is concerned, nothing is more advantageous than a certain fatalism in all mundane affairs. It has been plausibly argued that the decline of English letters dates from the hour when the writer was enabled to compete with the gentleman. Charles Lamb and his circle, for example, knew nothing of that social aspiration which has had so deleterious an effect upon their successors; and who will deny that among the circumstances that have retarded the development of our own literature, opportunity, as we cheerfully call it, has been chiefly to blame? Man is a being that thinks, but only by compulsion; and when there are so many paths to fortune, and all open, why should he subject himself to that discomfort which, as Renan said, is the principle of movement? For this reason the closing of the American frontier may fairly be taken to portend a certain intensification in our literary life.

The probability is, indeed, that so long as other and more natural forms of life are not beyond one's power of realization, the mind can not, or at least will not, be indifferent to them. If that is true, the absence of caste and class in our civilization must be regarded as a positive detriment to literature; for writers, like all craftsmen, are happiest when they possess a sphere of their own, a self-sufficient sphere out of which they



are never tempted to stray. That ancient tag about "the world forgetting, by the world forgot" really states the first principle of the conservation of energy in the literary life: such modern writers as Thomas Hardy and George Gissing exemplify it, and it was their acting on this principle that justified, as the late Alexander Teixeira de Mattos observes in one of his recently published letters, so many of the "men of the 'nineties." They "hadn't clubs, homes, wives or children," the admirable "Tex" remarks; "lunched for a shilling, dined for eighteenpence, and didn't want a lot of money. They cared neither for money nor fame; they cared for their own esteem and that of what you call their coterie and I their set." There we have the guild-spirit, the pride of the *métier*, out of which the art and literature of the past have come; but how far has not that pride been a consequence of the stratification of life in societies in which the individual has had virtually no chance of "rising in the world"? That heights can exist, as it were, at every social level, or rather that life is not entirely a matter of climbing the social bean-stalk, is an idea that seems to lodge only in minds that accept their level as predetermined. Thus the extremity of the old Adam is the opportunity of the new; and we may say that the star of hope rose over our literature on the day when the last barefoot boy in Missouri ceased to dream of inhabiting the White House.

It is certainly true that the writers of our generation have, as a class, begun to accept their fate. They have seceded, that is, from the bourgeoisie, and ceased to accept the verdict of their bankers as the last word on their own success or failure. Henry Adams justly remarked that the American mind of his day had less respect for money than the European or Asiatic mind, and bore its loss more easily; but he added that it had been deflected by the pursuit of money "till it could turn in no other direction." We can see the result in the American literature of the thirty years preceding the war: it was characteristic of the age of the "best sellers" that the chief preoccupation of its authors was the maintenance of a "standard of living," and few were those who were not driven by the fear of dropping behind in the race. That essentially alien ideal, to the pursuit of which we can trace the exaggerated "inferiority-complex" of the American writer as a type—for how can artists compete with captains of industry and preserve their self-respect?—that alien ideal no longer dominates our literary life. Our chief difficulty is that as yet no other ideal has taken its place.

The historians of the next generation who look back upon the American literature of our day will find in it, if one is not mistaken, all the traits of an interregnum of ideals. It will appear as marked, that is, by the habits of mind of the preceding epoch, oddly disoriented, fading, dissolving and at the same time undergoing all manner of indefinable transmutations; it will seem to bear a sort of intermediate character, as between a pioneer literature and a high literature in the proper sense. It is, in other words, the expression of a will to create, in minds that are incompletely adapted to the creative life. The assumed necessity of having to justify themselves financially, to conform to public opinion, to be useful and to produce only that which is useful; all this, together with our faulty education and our lack of leisure, combines to prevent American writers from accepting their status and making a fine art of it: they have at bottom the mental constitutions of practical men; and an ingrained need of the approval of the majority whom they despise perpetually stands

in the way of their strongest conscious desires. Hence the universal egomania and "tender-mindedness" of our contemporaries, their itch for publicity, their haunting fear of not being known, their desperate anxiety to keep up with every new idea, every new movement. They carry into the intellectual sphere the practices of the stock exchange, and for this there is a very good reason. Literature occupies only the upper levels of their minds, though it may occupy them so fully that they are aware of nothing else; but deep down, what still actuates them is a desire for a practical success.

In the normal course of things, the conscious cravings of one generation are likely to become the unconscious impulses of the next. The passionate material desires of the America of fifty years ago have passed below the threshold of the consciousness of our own epoch. Meanwhile, the typical minds of our day, actuated unwittingly by those desires, have been filled by desires of a very different order. When the latter have been ploughed under the soil, we may reasonably expect a genuine literary movement in this country; indeed, all the signs seem to point that way. In things of the mind, however, nothing is automatic: literary evolution, like heaven, helps only those who help themselves; and the American renaissance will not get very far unless it develops that guild-spirit which is the exact opposite of the spirit of log-rolling. The bad habits of the writers of to-day are due not only to their inheritance, but also to the precariousness of their situation: our society is not sufficiently organized for them to be able to feel that they are voicing, or can voice, anything but their individual sentiments, and for this reason they lack confidence in themselves; for all their sincere intentions, they can not quite believe in the legitimacy of the parts they are playing. Towards the organization of society, which is perhaps indispensable as the condition of a high literature, they can contribute very little; but the development of a craft-sense, a sense of the art, not only of writing but of being a writer, is within their power; and by means of it, by adhering exclusively to the standards and values of their *métier* and by steeping themselves in its traditions, they can prepare for the hour when society has need of them, and perhaps considerably hasten its coming. By so doing they will at least escape from that state of unstable equilibrium in which they now achieve so little that is good. "Let each one ask himself," said Goethe, "for what he is best fitted, and let him cultivate this most ardently and wisely in himself and for himself; let him consider himself successively as apprentice, as journeyman, as older journeyman, and finally, but with the greatest circumspection, as master." How different this attitude is, and how much more productive, than the prevailing attitude of our well-intentioned contemporaries. Strictly speaking, however, it is one of the logical consequences, in a human nature that exists by faith and will, of the necessity of accepting a limited status in life.

#### THE CHASE.

Ah, have you ever heard that tearful yowling with which a dog, mustering his utmost forces, takes up the pursuit of a hare in flight—that yowling in which fury and bliss, longing and ecstatic despair, mix and mingle? How often have I heard Bashan give vent to this! It is a grand passion, desired, sought for and deliriously enjoyed, which goes ringing through the landscape; and every time this wild cry comes to my ear from near or far, I experience a shock of pleasant fright, and the thrill goes tingling through all my limbs. Then I hurry forward, or to the



left or right, rejoicing that Bashan is to get his money's worth to-day, and I strive mightily to bring the chase within my range of vision. When this chase goes storming past me, in full and furious career, I stand banned and tense, even though the negative outcome of the venture is certain from the beginning, and look on whilst an excited smile draws taut the muscles of my face.

What of the hare—the timid, the tricky? He switches his ears through the air, corks his head backwards at an angle, and runs for dear life in long, lunging leaps, throwing his whitish-yellow scut into the air. Yet the rabbit in the depths of his fearsome and flighty soul ought to know that he is in no serious danger and that he will manage to escape, just as his brothers and sisters and he himself have always managed to escape. Not once in all his life has Bashan managed to catch a single rabbit, and it is practically beyond the bounds of possibility that he ever should. Many dogs, as the old proverb goes, bring about the death of the hare—a clear proof that a single dog can not manage it. For the hare is a master of the quick and sudden turnabout—a feat quite beyond the capacity of Bashan; and it is this feat which decides the whole matter. It is an infallible weapon and an attribute of the animal that is born to fight with flight; a means of elusion which can be applied at any moment and which it carries in its instincts in order to put it into use at precisely that moment when victory is almost within Bashan's grasp—and then, alas, Bashan is betrayed and sold.

Here they come, shooting diagonally through the woods, flash across the path on which I am standing, and then go dashing toward the river, the rabbit dumb and bearing his inherited trick in his heart, Bashan yammering in high and heady tones. I am on Bashan's side, because his passion is infectious; imperatives which force me to hope fervently that he will succeed, even at the peril of seeing him tear the rabbit to pieces before my eyes. Ah, how he runs! How beautiful it is, how edifying to see a living creature unfolding all its forces in some supreme effort. My dog runs better than this hare; his muscular system is stronger; the distance between them has visibly diminished ere they are lost to sight. I leave the path and hurry through the park towards the left, going in the direction of the river-bank. I emerge upon the gravelly street just in time to see the mad chase come tearing on from the right—the hopeful, infinitely thrilling chase—for Bashan is almost at the heels of the hare. He is silent now; he is running with his teeth set, the close proximity of the scent urges him to the final effort.

"One last plunge, Bashan," I think, and would like to shout to him, "just one more—aim well! Keep cool! And beware of the turnabout!" But these thoughts have scarcely flashed through my brain than the "turnabout," the "hook," the *volte-face* has taken place, the catastrophe is upon us. My gallant dog makes the decisive forward plunge, but at the selfsame moment there is a short jerk, and with pert and limber swiftness the hare switches aside at a right angle to the course, and Bashan goes shooting past the hindquarters of his quarry—shooting straight ahead, howling, desperate, and with all his feet stemmed as brakes, so that the dust and gravel go flying in all directions.

"It's no use," I think, "it may be beautiful, but it is surely futile." The wild pursuit vanishes in the distances of the park and in the opposite direction. "There ought to be more dogs—five or six—a whole pack of dogs! There ought to be dogs to cut him off on the flank, dogs to cut him off ahead, dogs to drive him into a corner, dogs to be in at the death." In my mind's eye, in my excitement, I behold a whole pack of foxhounds with lolling tongues go storming upon the rabbit in their midst.

I think these things and dream these dreams out of a sheer passion for the chase, for what has the rabbit done to me that I should wish him to meet with so terrible an end? It is true that Bashan is closer to me than the long-eared one, and it is quite in order that I should share his feelings and accompany him with my good wishes for his success. But then the rabbit is also a warm, furry, breathing bit of our common life. He has played his trick upon my hunting-dog not out of malice, but out of the urgent wish to be able to nibble soft tree-shoots a little longer and to bring forth young.

Often a rabbit-chase comes to an end in a few minutes; that is to say, when the rabbit succeeds after a few hot lengths of running, in ducking into the underbrush and hiding, or in throwing his pursuer off his trail by means of feints and quick double turns, so that the four-legged hunter, sorely puzzled and uncertain, jumps hither and thither, whilst I shout bloodthirsty advice and by frantic gesticulations with my cane try to point out to him the direction in which I saw the rabbit escape.

Sometimes the hunt extends itself throughout the length and breadth of the landscape, so that Bashan's voice, wildly yowling, sounds like a hunting-horn ringing through the region from afar, now nearer and now farther away, whilst I, awaiting his return, calmly go my ways, until, great Heavens! in what a condition he does return! Foam drips from his jaws, his thighs are lax and hollow, his ribs flutter, his tongue hangs long and loose from his maw, inordinately gaping, something which caused his drunken and swimming eyes to appear distorted and slant, Mongolian, the whilst his breathing goes like a steam engine.

"Lie down, Bashan!" I command him, "take a rest, or you'll have apoplexy of the lungs!" I halt so as to give him time to recover. Nevertheless, whilst he lies there, gazing up at me with confused eye, now and again snapping up his dribblings, I can not refrain from poking a bit of fun at him, because of the unalterable futility of his efforts.

"Bashan! where's that rabbit? Aren't you going to fetch me that rabbit?" He snaps in embarrassment, for he does not know that my ridicule is intended merely to conceal from him and from myself an accretion of shame and guilty conscience, because I, on my part, was not man enough to "hold up" the rabbit—as it was the duty of a real master to do. He is unaware of all this, and so it is easy for me to make fun and to put the matter as though he were in some way to blame.

Strange things sometimes occur during these hunts. I shall never forget how the rabbit once ran into my very arms. Bashan was in full cry after his quarry and I was approaching the zone of the river-bank from the direction of the wood. I broke through the thistle-stalks along the gravel slope and sprang down the grass-covered declivity onto the path at the very moment that the rabbit, with Bashan some fifteen paces behind him, was coming toward me in long bounds from the direction of the ferryman's house, towards which I was turning. The rabbit came running along the middle of the path straight toward me.

My first hunter-like and hostile impulse was to take advantage of the situation and to bar his way, driving him, if possible, back into the jaws of his pursuer who came on, yelping in poignant joy. There I stood, as though rooted to the spot and, slave that I was to the fever of the chase, I simply balanced the stick in my hand whilst the rabbit came nearer and nearer. I knew that a rabbit's vision is very poor, that only the sense of hearing and the sense of smell are able to convey warnings to him. He might, therefore, possibly mistake me for a tree as I stood there; it was my plan and my lively desire



that he should do this, and so succumb to a fatal error, the consequences of which I thought to make use of. Whether the rabbit really made such an error during the course of his advance, is not quite clear. I believe that he noticed me only at the very last moment, for what he did was so unexpected that all my schemes and deliberations were at once reduced to nothing, and a deep, sudden and startling change took place in my state of mind.

Was the little animal beside itself with mortal fear? Enough that it leaped upon me, like a little dog, ran up my overcoat with its tiny paws, and still upright, struggled to bore itself into the depths of my chest—the terrible chest of the master of the chase. With upraised arms and my body bent backwards, I stood there and looked down upon the rabbit, who, on his part, looked up at me. We stood thus for only a second, perhaps it was only the fraction of a second, but thus and there we stood. I saw him with such strange, disconcerting minuteness, saw his long ears, of which one stood upright, whilst the other hung down, saw his great, clear, protuberant, short-sighted eyes, his rough lip and the long hairs of his whiskers, the white on his breast and the little paws. I felt or seemed to feel the pounding of his harried little heart. It was very strange to see him thus plainly and to have him so close to me, the little familiar spirit of the place, the secret throbbing heart of the landscape, this ever evasive creature which I had seen only for a few brief moments in its meadows and downs as it went scudding comically away. Now in the extremity of its need and helplessness it was nestling up against me and clutching my coat, clutching at the breast of a man—not the man, it seemed to me, who was Bashan's master, but the breast of one who is also the master of the rabbit and of Bashan and of Bashan's master. This lasted as I have said, only a brief moment or so, and then the rabbit had dropped off, had once more taken to his unequal legs and jumped down the escarpment to the left, whilst Bashan had now arrived in his place—Bashan with horrible hue and cry and with all the heady tones of his frenetic hunting-howls, all of which suffered swift interruption on his arrival. A well-aimed blow of the stick delivered with malice prepense by the master of the rabbit, sent him yelping with smarting hindquarters down the slope to the right, up which he was forced to climb—with a limp—before he was once more able, after considerable delay, to take up the trail of the no longer visible quarry.

THOMAS MANN.

(Translated by Herman George Scheffauer.)

## A NOTE ON THE SCOTTISH BALLADS.

It is a thing worth noting that the one or two great poets whom Scotland has produced have been men in the ordinary sense uncultivated. Excepting Scott, those of whom we know anything have sprung from peasant or humble stock; and there was even before Burns, who set a fashion, a tradition of peasant poetry and a belief that an artificer of Scottish song might most congruously be a ploughman or a weaver. In poets of this degree, so scarce in English literature, Scottish poetry has almost always been prolific; and against the solitary figure of Blomfield it can set Fergusson, Ramsay, Tannahill, and a host of others, the worst of whom are sentimental and the best, if minor poets, most authentically poets. Outside these, among her imaginative prose writers, Scotland has shown a disposition for common and even mean conditions. Carlyle was the son of a mason, and George Douglas, the young student of Glasgow University who wrote one novel of passionate genius, "The House with the Green Shutters" and then died, was the illegitimate offspring of a servant girl. Since English became the

literary language of Scotland there has been no Scots imaginative writer who has attained greatness in the first or even the second rank through the medium of English. Scott achieved classical prose, prose with the classical qualities of solidity, force and measure, only when he wrote in the Scottish dialect; his Scottish dialogue is great prose, and his one essay in Scottish imaginative literature, "Wandering Willie's Tale," is a masterpiece of prose, of prose which one must go back to the seventeenth century to parallel. The style of Carlyle, on the other hand, was taken bodily from the Scots pulpit; he was a parish minister of genius, and his English was not great English, but great Scots English; the most hybrid of all styles, with some of the virtues of the English Bible and many of the vices of the Scottish version of the Psalms of David; a style whose real model may be seen in Scott's anticipatory parody of it in "Old Mortality." He took the most difficult qualities of the English language and the worst of the Scots and through them attained a sort of absurd, patchwork greatness. But—this can be said for him—his style expressed, in spite of its overstrain, and even through it, something real, the struggle of a Scots peasant, born to other habits of speech and of thought, with the English language. Stevenson—and it was the sign of his inferiority, his lack of fundamental merit—never had this struggle, nor realized that it was necessary that he should have it. He was from the first a mere literary man, a man to whom language was a literary medium and nothing more, and with no realization of the unconditional mystery and strength of utterance. He sweated over words, but the more laboriously he studied them the more superficial he became, and to the end his conception of an English style remained that of a graceful and coloured surface for his thoughts and sensations. Below this were concealed, as pieces of unresolved matter, almost an irrelevancy, the plots of his novels, his knobbly or too smooth characters, and his thoughts which he had never the courage to face. What he achieved was more akin than anything else to what another foreigner, Mr. Joseph Conrad, has since achieved: a picturesque display of words, with something unspanned between the sense and the appearance. The other two Scots-English writers of the last half-century, John Davidson and James Thomson, the author of "The City of Dreadful Night," were greater men than Stevenson, less affected and more fundamental: but fundamental as they were, they lacked something which in English poetry is fundamental, and the oblivion into which they are fallen, undeserved as it seems when we consider their great talents, is yet, on some ground not easy to state, just. The thing I am examining here, superficial in appearance, goes deep. No writer can write great English who is not born an English writer and in England; and born moreover in some class in which the tradition of English is pure, and it seems to me, therefore, in some other age than this. English as it was written by Bunyan or by Fielding can not be written now except by some one who like them has passed his days in a tradition of living English speech. A whole life went into that prose; and all that Stevenson could give to his was a few decades of application. And because the current of English is even at this day so much younger, poorer and more artificial in Scotland than it is in England, it is improbable that Scotland will produce any writer of English of the first rank, or at least that she will do so until her tradition of English is as common, as unforced and unschooled as if it were her native tongue.



Nor does this exhaust the possibilities, or impossibilities, of the Scottish manipulation of English. The superficially significant thing about Scottish writers is that they generally come from some humble rank of life; the superficially significant thing about English writers is that they come, as a rule, from some class cultivated, or with a tradition of culture. This difference is, taking a purely literary view, a matter of speech, but it is not entirely nor indeed chiefly so. What distinguishes the Scottish peasantry is not only its cradling in the dialect, but a whole view of life, a view of life intensely simple on certain great, human things, but naturalistic, perhaps in a certain sense materialistic. This simple vision of life, of life as a thing of sin and pleasure, passing, but passing with an intense vividness as of a flame, before something eternal, is the greatest thing which Scotland has given to the literature of the world. Everything which obscures the clearness of this vision, making it less simple than itself when it is most simple, is antagonistic to the Scottish genius; and here, and here only, in defence of their naturalism, of this terrific, sad and simple vision of life, the Scots are iconoclasts, and contemptuous of the thing called culture or humanism which in other lands has had such glorious fruits. Knox expressed the national temper when, disdainfully asserting that the image of the Madonna was only "a bit painted wuid," he threw it into the sea; and Carlyle repeated it on a grand scale in his Dumfriesshire judgments on all the figures which the culture of the West gave into his hands. Carlyle, in genius one of the greatest of all the writers born in Scotland, was in attainment one of the most patchy and immature, simply because he constantly passed judgments on men and cultures foreign to him; judgments which of Scotsmen and Scots culture would have been true, but which of them were valid perhaps only on some intensely human plane, and on every other absurd.

This sense of life and death, of pleasure and sin, of joy and loss, not thrown out lavishly into all the manifestations of life as Shakespeare threw them out, but intensified to one point, to the breaking point where a flame springs forth: that is the sense which has inspired the greatest Scottish poetry: the poetry of Burns, the poetry of the ballads. Burns, it is true, was more nearly than any other Scottish poet a humanist, and had more than any other a delight in the variety of life; but when he was greatest he came to simplicity, that simplicity of stark, fundamental human things which the ballads more perfectly than any other poetry express. He is not greatest in lines, magical as they are, such as

Yestreen when to the trembling string  
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',

but in

And sae I sat, and sae I sang,  
And wistna o' my fate,

or in

We twa hae paid'd in the burn  
Frae morning sun to dine,  
But seas between us braid hae roared  
Sin' auld lang syne,

or in

And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Though a' the seas gang dry.

The unquenchability of desire, the inexorability of separation, the lapse of time, and all these seen against something eternal and as if, expressed in a few lines, they were what human beings have felt

from the beginning of time and must feel until time ends: these things, uttered with entire simplicity, are what at its best Scottish poetry can give us, and it can give them with the intensity and the inevitability of the greatest poetry. The ballads go immediately to that point beyond which it is impossible to go, and touch the very bounds of passion and of life; and they achieve great poetry by an unconditionality which rejects, where other literatures use, the image. In no poetry, probably, in the world is there less imagery than in the ballads. But this, once more, is not the sign of poetic debility, but of a terrific simplicity and intensity, an intensity which never loosens into reflection; and reflection is one of the moods in which images are given to the mind. There is nothing in the ballads but passion, terror, instinct, action: the states in which soul and body alike live most intensely; and this accounts for the impression of full and moving life which, stark and bare as they are, they leave with us. It is this utter absence of reflection which distinguishes them also from the English ballads, not only from those surrounding the name of Robin Hood, which are nothing but simple folk-art, but from really beautiful English ballads such as "The Unquiet Grave." There are several Scottish ballads containing, like it, a dialogue between two lovers, the one living and the other dead; but there is none which treats the subject in this way:

'The wind doth blow to-day, my love,  
And a few small drops of rain;  
I never had but one true love;  
In cold grave she is lain. . . .

"Tis down in yonder garden green,  
Love, where we used to walk,  
The finest flower that ere was seen  
Is withered to a stalk.

'The stalk is withered dry, my love,  
So will our hearts decay;  
So make yourself content, my love,  
Till God calls you away.'

That is beautiful, and as poetry as perfect in its way as anything in the Scottish ballads; but what a difference there is in spirit and in atmosphere. Here there is retrospection and resignation; but there only the present, the eternal present, and the immediate acceptance of it, exist, and we never escape from the unmixed joy, the absolute pain. There is philosophy in "The Unquiet Grave," the quality of a great reflective poetry; there is morality in it, the inescapable ethical sense of the English, and that feeling of ultimate surrender which goes always with a genuine morality. But see with what a total lack of moral compensation, or of moral blunting, or of resignation, or of alleviation—with what a lyrical and unconditional passion the same theme is treated in a great Scottish ballad, in "Clerk Saunders":

'Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?  
Is there ony room at your feet?  
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,  
Where fain, fain wad I sleep?'

'There's nae room at my head, Marg'ret,  
There's nae room at my feet;  
My bed it is fu' lowly now,  
Among the hungry worms I sleep.'

Or, almost as simple and great:

'O cocks are crowing on merry middle earth,  
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;  
Give me my faith and troth again,  
And let me fare me on my way.'



'Thy faith and troth thou sallna get,  
And our true love sall never twin,  
Until ye tell what comes o' women,  
I wot, who die in strong traivelling?'

I do not wish to make any comparison between these two poems, both great in their kind, or to praise one at the expense of the other. I wish merely, what is infinitely more important, to make clear what are the peculiar attributes of the Scottish ballads, and what it is that they have given to the poetry of the world. And it is pre-eminently this sense of immediate love, terror, drama; this ecstatic living in passion at the moment of its expression and not on reflection, and the experiencing of it therefore purely, as unmixed joy, as complete terror, in a concentration on the apex of the moment, in a shuddering realization of the moment, whatever it may be, whether it is

I wish that horn were in my kist,  
Yea, and the knight in my arms neist.

or

And I am weary o' the skies  
For my love that died for me.

or

Yestreen I made my bed fu' braid,  
The night I'll make it narrow.

or

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,  
Everie nighte and alle,  
Fire and sleete and candle lighte,  
And Christe receive thy saule.

This world in which there is no reflection, no regard for the utility of action, nothing but pure passion seen through pure vision, is, if anything is, the world of art. To raise immediate passion to poetry in this way, without the alleviation of reflection, without the necromancy of memory, requires a vision of unconditional clearness, like that of a child; and it may be said of the Scottish ballad-writers that they attained poetry by pure, unalleviated insight, by unquestioning artistic heroism; and this quality it is that, in the last analysis, makes the very greatest poetry great, that makes "Lear" great, and "Antony and Cleopatra." In Shakespeare and in Dante it is united with other qualities through which its utterance becomes infinitely various and rich: in the greatest of the Scottish ballads there is this quality, and this alone. This, and not the occasional strangeness of their subject matter, is what gives them their magic, a magic of ultimate simplicity, of supernatural simplicity, as in

O they rade on, and farther on,  
And they waded rivers abune the knee,  
And they saw neither sun nor moon  
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

from "Thomas the Rhymer." Or, from "Tam Lin":

About the dead hour o' the night  
She heard the bridles ring.

There is here nothing but a final clearness of vision which finds of itself, as by some natural, or rather, supernatural, process, an absolute reality of utterance which does not need the image. The thing is given in the ballads and not a simile either illuminating or cloaking it; and this absence of the image has in itself an artistic value, and produces an effect which can not be produced in any other way: it makes the real form and colour of things stand out with a distinctness which is that, not of things seen by daylight, but of those, more absolute, more incapable of being questioned, which we see in dreams. When a

colour is set before us in the ballads it has a reality which colour has not in poetry where imagery is used; it has not merely a poetic value, it has the ultimate value of pure colour. This is the reason why the ballad of "Jamie Douglas" gives us an impression of richness as of some intricate tapestry, though the means are as simple as

When we cam' in by Glasgow toun  
We were a comely sight to see;  
My Love was clad in the black velvét,  
And I mysel' in cramasie,

or

I had lock'd my heart in a case o' gowd  
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.

There the qualities of the velvet, the crimson, the gold and silver are seen as they are only seen in childhood, for the first time, and with something solid in the vision of them; something which we have perhaps for ever lost, and which the painters of our day, with their preoccupation with volume, are trying to rediscover; but which was given to the ballad-writers by the sheer unconditionality of their vision, and by that something materialistic in the imagination of the Scots which is one of their greatest qualities.

The art of these ballads may appear to us untutored, rough, falling occasionally into absurdities, and, regarding such things as diction and rhyme, showing a contempt for the perfection towards which all art necessarily strives. But the more we study them the more astonished we must become at their perfection on another side: that completeness of organic form which makes each an economically articulated thing. There is, it is true, a sort of logic of ballad-writing, a technique of repetition, of question and answer, not difficult to handle and handled in some of the ballads far too freely; but in the greatest, in "Clerk Saunders," "May Colvin," "The Lass of Lochroyan," and "Sir Patrick Spens," the technique is fused in the inevitability of the movement from beginning to end, so that one can see them in one glance as one sees a short lyric. The sensation which these give us is the sensation which can only be given by great conscious art. It is not a matter of the compulsory unity which folk-ballads, sung before a company, must have: for that one need only go to the English ballads about Robin Hood, ballads definitely beneath the level of poetry, which can run on in the style of

The King cast off his coat then,  
A green garment he did on,  
And every knight had so, i-wis,  
They clothéd them full soon,

for as long as one likes. The difference between that and

The King sits in Dunfermline toun  
Drinking the blude-red wine

is the difference between a thing seen and shaped by a company of common men in a jovial mood, and a thing seen and shaped by a great spirit, lifted up on the wings of imagination. All these English ballads are timid, ordinary, and have the mediocre happy ending which crowds love. For example, three of Robin Hood's followers, we are told, go down to London, cast themselves on the King's mercy and nevertheless are condemned to death: they are reprieved at the last moment by the Queen. This would not happen in a great Scottish ballad. Johnnie Armstrong, in the ballad of that name, puts himself in the power of the Scots King, and he, too, is condemned to die, but there is no reprieve. The difference in treatment



between the two episodes is the difference once more between great poetry, imagined by a heroic and sincere spirit, and second rate folk-poetry, recounted by good-natured and insincere men. In the ballads of Robin Hood we are not told, as we are in the Scottish, what must happen, the circumstances being such and such; we are told what the ballad-makers wish to happen. The vulgarity of the happy ending, which has disfigured so much of the greatest English imaginative literature since, making it less great than it should have been, is already full-fledged here. I say vulgarity, for the fault of the happy ending is that it is vulgar; it is a descent from the level of æsthetic vision where tragedy is bearable to that of our ordinary wishes, where it is not; a complete betrayal of truth and beauty at the bidding of an impulse perfectly natural and perfectly common. This surrender negates form by its own spirit, just as the unflinching grasp of æsthetic vision holds and fulfills form. The dependence of style upon this thing is in poetry absolute; and it is by virtue of their spirit, and because they are conceived and executed entirely on the level of æsthetic vision, that the Scottish ballads are opulent in examples of great form and great style, as, to quote an example of both:

'Why does your brand sae drop wi' blude,  
Edward, Edward?

Why does your brand sae drop wi' blude,  
And why sae sad gang ye, O?'

'O I hae kill'd my hawk sae gude,  
Mither, mither;

O I hae kill'd my hawk sae gude,  
And I had nae mair but he, O.'

To write poetry such as that, not only an exquisite sense of form was needed, but a great and sincere spirit, an elevated and intrepid mind.

Looking back on that tremendous world mirrored in the Scottish ballads, one is tempted to exclaim, What a culture there must have been once in that narrow tract of land between Edinburgh and the Border, and what a tragedy it was that its grand conception of life as a thing of sin and enjoyment, of life and death, of time and eternity, realized in pure imagination, was turned by Knox and the Reformation into a theology and a set of intellectual principles! But Knox's work has been done; it has not been undone; and time alone will show whether it ever will be. Certainly only a people who saw life so intensely as a matter of sin and pleasure, of sin in pleasure and pleasure in sin, could have accepted with such passion a theology which saw life as a thing of transgression and damnation. There is something unswerving, and however we may dislike and deplore it, heroic, in the theology as well as the poetry of Scotland. A burning contemplation of things which take men beyond time made her equally the destined victim of Calvinism and the chosen land of the ballads. But of that national tragedy it is idle now to speak. To those, however, who deny that a poetry so immediate as that of Scotland, so entirely without reflection, can be great human poetry and of value in a world in which so much of the dignity of the life of men is involved in the fact that they are capable of reflection, one can only say that a mighty reflection, or rather something more than a reflection, is implied in the very spirit of the ballads, a reflection on supreme issues which is unerring and absolute and has come to an end; a reflection not tentative, not concerned with this or that episode in a poem, with this or that quality, moral or immoral, or with the practicality or impracticality of life but of life itself, finally and

greatly; a reflection which is a living vision of life seen against eternity: the final reflection beyond which it is impossible for the human spirit to go. In the Scottish ballads life is not seen, as it is seen so often in English imaginative literature, as good and bad, moral or immoral, but on a greater and more intense level, as a vision of sin, tremendous, fleeting, always the same and always to be the same, set against some unchangeable thing. In this world, so clear is the full vision that pity is not a moral quality, but simply pity; passion not egoistic, but simply passion; and life and death have the greatness and simplicity of things comprehended in a tremendously spacious horizon. It is idle to attribute this simplicity, which is a capacity for seeing things as they are eternally, to the primitiveness of the existence which the ballads mirror. Life was at that time, as it has been always, complex, a mystery not easily to be pierced. If one wishes to see what mere simplicity without an overpowering vision of life seen *sub specie æternitatis* can do, one can go in any case to the folk-ballads surrounding Robin Hood. But the Scottish ballads have something which ordinary folk-poetry has not, that great quality, that magnanimity about life, inadequately called philosophic, which Arnold found in Homer.

Whether the Scottish genius will ever return to some modified form of the ballad as its pre-ordained medium it is useless to consider to-day. Probably Scottish writers are fated hereafter to use English, and to use it, taking all things into account, not with supreme excellence. But it is difficult to avoid two conclusions: that the ballads enshrine the very essence of the Scottish spirit, and that they could have been written only in the Scottish tongue.

EDWIN MUIR.

### THE WOMAN WHO WORSHIPS MAN.

ONE sighs to think how mellifluously that voice—that dying voice—of Alcestis must have discharged itself through a telephone. Clarity of utterance, vowel sounds exquisitely co-ordinated, and a nice precision of consonants all blend in the linguals, the labials and the dentals of Alcestis while she lies dying for Admetus, there on her couch in the open air. Who can go over and over her Greek, which Euripides has compounded like a cooling drink on a hot day, without hoping that just such a voice as must have been that of the expiring Alcestis will yet call "t-t-h-r-r-r-e-e-e o-h n-i-n-e o-h!" with her celestial enunciation. Alcestis in the capacity of a telephone-girl who is actually the mistress of her medium—that classifies her as the miracle of articulation that she is. What ear, ravished by her accents, would fail to interpret the most baffling of the Greek particles or miss the finest shade of meaning all through the conjugation of the most irregular Greek verb? Think of the lines of waiting men outside the telephone-booths in the cigar-stores, eager to get at the receiver for the sake of a classical education because Alcestis is talking!

With how artless a heroism, too, Alcestis died for her simple faith that man was made for woman to worship! Doctor Dryasdust, naturally, gets the lady all wrong. "At first Alcestis speaks excitedly in lyric measures," he tells us, "but afterwards recovers sufficient calmness to converse with her husband in the ordinary metre of tragic dialogue." This is the most he can make of a telephone-voice on the brink of the grave. For the sake of that voice everybody was on hand to see her die, for Alcestis was not the type of genius that must be positively in the grave before it is appreciated or understood. Nobody needed any assurance that she would die divinely at precisely the appropriate hour. She would never keep



an eager Hades too long on the alert. No creature was ever more perfect than a perfect lady, if such an abuse of terms be pardonable, with the solitary exception of a lady in Greek tragedy; and Alcestis is the finest lady in all Greek tragedy. Among its heroines she ranks as the first folio of Shakespeare ranks among rare editions.

Nevertheless, Alcestis does nothing but die except talk, yet both are perhaps the most difficult things in the world to achieve with her effects of edification. Not that she posed or acted or was not her conscious self to the last. Alcestis triumphs over our emotions and our temperaments because while she is talking ravishingly she is dying lightly, gracefully and, as the French say, intimately. By the time we grow to know her well, Alcestis is a cadaver, a lovely, classical cadaver, and the point of her story is still to come. How Euripides does, to use our American idiom, get it all "over"! Perhaps the domestic difficulties for which he was so famed, arose from the fact that, like all masculine natures, he shrank from the worship of any woman, for Euripides was a man's man.

His portrait of Admetus, the husband of Alcestis, is no less convincing than his sketch of Alcestis herself. Poor Admetus! The French are fond of reminding us that nobody loves the husband of a beautiful woman, but the Greeks found it out long before the French had a theatre, and the Alcestis of Euripides proves that we should at any rate pity the husband of a beautiful woman. The effect of this beauty of hers upon her husband is conveyed subtly, deliciously, for the very vocabulary of Alcestis, being Greek, lends itself to the expression of the feminine soul. Classical Greek seems to be the only tongue with both a masculine and a feminine manner of expression, unless this be an illusion created by the sheer genius of Euripides. Shakespeare, even through the medium of a speech as masculine as Elizabethan English, conveys effects of this feminine manner in some parts of "Hamlet."

The two manners alternate as Admetus and Alcestis go over and over together the circumstances in which she is to die so prettily. He is cloyed with the sweetness of her worship, the incense of it. She dies worshipping him; but he has had many a year of just such bliss. He feels that he has been worshipped enough as it is. He does not want her to die for him. He would much prefer to do his own dying but his wife won't let him. One detects his undertone of exasperation in every expression of his grief, but she is obdurate. Already Alcestis beholds the bark in which Charon is to convey her to the world below. The voice of the ferryman of the Styx is in her ears. She has a rendezvous with death, if one may appropriate respectfully the most beautiful phrase that is left over from the world-war; she has a rendezvous with death, and Alcestis is too poetical for any tardiness in keeping the appointment. There is only time in which to remind her husband of the beauty of her death from an æsthetic point of view because, while she is dying for him, she did not have to. It was a voluntary immolation of self.

No breath was ever so thrown away as that exhausted by Admetus in assuring his wife that he does not want her to die for him, that he hopes she may yet live on. Alcestis is not to be moved. She could, she confesses, have let her husband perish instead of departing herself for the shades below. She could have married another, a most eligible individual. She was such a devoted wife, and how well she knew it! She assures Admetus that he must not marry again, a thing she would have done, it seems, although on this point there is risk of doing her an injustice. Alcestis knew that never again on earth would her husband find such another treasure as herself, and of this he had to be made aware. She was eager to

spare both him and their children the shock of finding that out from actual experience. Not that she had any jealousy. It was merely that Admetus did not understand women. He must not be left under a fatal misconception! How she runs on, and with what a convincing effect! The magic of a voice!

As a type of womanhood, Alcestis reigned in something like moral grandeur over the whole ancient world, a world in which for generations Euripides seemed to hold the rank we now accord to Shakespeare. It was really against the whole spirit of Alcestis that Paul thundered in that masterpiece among his epistles which has provoked such irrational resentment in a certain type of feminine bosom. Paul—if the "left-wing" of feminism could but grasp the fact—was in revolt against woman's conception of man as something stronger and higher than herself. Only a monumental ignorance of the classics on the part of the feminists in general could excuse their agitation at Paul's teaching in his great epistle, especially as Doctor Dryasdust is himself highly edified by Alcestis with her outburst into lyric measures.

The Greek tragedians had, indeed, caught a glimpse of the great truth outlined in the epistle to the Ephesians, people among whom Alcestis was no less appreciated in the Apostle's day than she was in Athens when Euripides wrote. In a conflict of wills between a man and a woman, can the woman ever really prevail? The hot dispute between Antigone and her sister in the masterpiece of Sophocles rages around this very point. It is raised delicately in the Alcestis of Euripides and roughly in the vehement epistle of Paul. "This is a great mystery." It was indeed to that ancient world—as it remains to this modern one of ours.

Paul was able to shed the light of his vision upon this mystery because, as he explained, he spoke concerning Christ and the Church, but he came a long, long way after Alcestis and the daughters of Œdipus, and well he realized the obstinacy of the fact at Athens.

Those daughters of Œdipus had been confronted with the problem of making a woman's will prevail over a man's, and we know the ethical plane upon which Antigone solved it, only to perish. The whole issue in Greek tragedy is there in Paul's epistle and it baffles us yet. The mere existence of a clash between a man's will and a woman's was to the Apostle proof of a lack of spirituality in their relations. The precise opposite was the attitude of Greek tragedy. In any conflict between a man's will and a woman's, both, we learn from Greek tragedy, will prevail—first one and then the other. Euripides solved the problem in the Alcestis with the ease afforded him by his genius. Paul shifted the controversy to the plane of what he called Christ and the Church.

The Apostle does this by turning the flank, if one may use a military phrase in his own manner, of the whole position held in the pagan world in his day by Alcestis as the ideal wife. In Paul's day, we must remember, Admetus still drank in her devotion like nectar, although in the atmosphere of a worship so idolatrous he nearly suffocates before our eyes. With her woman's ignorance of the natures of men, Alcestis does not once suspect the degradation of the masculine character through a worship like hers. Not that woman in those days submitted to man—far from it. There was ever and ever the clash of wills between them, and it worked out then as it works out now. If the man prevailed on the masculine plane in the beginning, the woman prevailed on the feminine plane in the end. The controversy was always personal rather than ethical, and the contest of wills terminated—except in such a case as that of Antigone—in a triumph that was purely personal or in a defeat that was no less so.



Thus it was that the pagan conception of marriage worked out in such general disedification. The feuds were shocking. That was why the clash of wills between husband and wife rendered Greek tragedy so sanguinary. The contest between Alcestis and Admetus resolved itself into something beautiful. Hence the universal esteem in which it was held in Paul's day. The play had the demerit, assuming that Paul ever witnessed it, of confirming the ancient mind in that worship of man by woman which from the Apostle's standpoint was among the abominations of the age. How completely the point is missed by those who do not know the Greek tragic writers!

Paul, who knew those writers well, is in constant revolt against their conception of woman's relation to her world. She had reared him upon a pedestal too high for him and he knew it, but there he must remain poised to satisfy her need for a man to worship. Admetus was paying everywhere a high price for his masculinity. Alcestis would not permit her idol to die. She persisted sweetly in her worship of him, she defied him sweetly, she died sweetly, his worshipper to the last. "Wives," said Paul, who had certainly heard much of Alcestis, "submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord!"

Only a mind saturated with the spirit of classical antiquity can grasp completely, perhaps, the revolutionary character of Paul's attitude towards woman's worship of man as thus set forth in the epistle to the Ephesians. The admonition had nothing to do with a purely personal clash of wills between a man and a woman. That did not interest Paul. He thought only of woman's immolation of herself in her worship of man. She put her man before her god, her husband's will before the will of God. It was her conception of love, and nothing was more loathsome to Paul than woman's conception of love as he understood it, a pagan conception that led her to worship an idol of her own creation. Paul saw the difficulty with pagan woman. This was her tendency to submit herself to her husband because he was her husband. The idea that she should submit herself to her husband as unto the Lord was too bewildering to an age that had not learned to submit unto the Lord at all. Even in our own age this passage is interpreted as if the Apostle were dealing with a clash of wills in a pagan tragedy and not with woman's worship of man.

Poor Admetus! He, like Paul, had good reason to know that the curse of being a man is all comprised in the persistence of some woman in this immolation of herself, in the necessity of his submission to the ineluctability of woman's worship, the inevitability of woman's love. The themes of Greek tragedy are all eternal themes, but not one is so insistent in its actuality as that which makes the Alcestis of Euripides an exposure of the soul of woman not only in her own age but even down to this century in which we have still to live with Alcestis. She is so true to the god of her idolatry.

Now the idea in the mind of Paul, odd as it must seem to the radical feminists, was not merely to redeem woman from this cult of man but to rescue man himself from the enervation of it. Nothing could be sounder than the instinct of Admetus in refusing his consent to the sacrifices made before his shrine by Alcestis, but the incorrigible creature persists in worshipping the man of her choice rather than the God of Paul. She has been enslaved so long, explains Alcestis in those fluted accents, that she must have a man's judgment upon even a political issue before she can decide it for herself.

Thus she remains, even after the triumph of woman suffrage, and indeed to some extent because of it, the one faithful worshipper at the shrine of man, the only creature who can never lose her faith in him. Admetus

flees her worship vainly. Alcestis is back once more from hell, and woman suffrage is the Hercules that went down and got her up again. Poor Admetus! He is back upon that pedestal which this time is the ballot box, before which Alcestis stands in worship of that same old idol, man.

ALEXANDER HARVEY.

## MISCELLANY.

A COUPLE of books have been lying on my desk for almost a year; and now that I have read them, I scarcely know for the life of me what one can think or say about them. They are the first and third volumes of "Representative Plays by American Dramatists," edited with not a little skill and fidelity by Mr. Montrose J. Moses; and in range and variety this collection, it seems to me, leaves very little to be desired. The beginnings of an authentic native drama seem to occur about 1765; and from that point Mr. Moses carries us down almost to the present time with "The Easiest Way" and "The Return of Peter Grimm." I can conceive that an American actor might care to have these volumes on his shelf as a sort of pious testimony to his love for Thalia and Melpomene and the rest of the Muses; but there is scarcely a single play in these two bulky tomes that can be read for ten minutes on end without yawning; and I can not conceive how anyone can take this huge parcel of dramas seriously except under the inspiration of a cultural Ku-Klux-Klan-nishness. Yes, these plays can be read without reserve by white, Protestant, native-born, hundred-per-cent Americans; and this is about all one can say for them.

INDEED, Mr. Montrose Moses himself says little to commend these brummagem jewels of American literature. According to him these plays, although often "very crude," attempted to heighten our national consciousness and to pave the way "for the proper expression of national characteristics." Furthermore, the plays have been, for the most part, selected because they have a certain American flavour, and it is one of their merits that they portray the change in social customs and ideals from generation to generation. All this is very fine and patriotic; but it does not provide an intelligent person with a single valid reason for so much as sniffing the binding of these books. Nobody nowadays would read Holberg or Schiller solely on the grounds that he reflected his national milieu or heightened the sentiment of nationality; and it is hard to persuade oneself to reverse one's canons of judgment just because the authors in question are members of a certain political State and have, at one time or another, supported the Constitution or voted manfully for the Grand Old Party. These virtues are all very well in their places, perhaps; but their place is not in literature, and anyone concerned with literary values should know it. If writers in America have contributed only one or two plays that can be placed in the same gallery as Sheridan or Shaw or Hauptmann or Ibsen, let us be content to single out these one or two plays, and pay them homage; and let it go at that. The bulky volumes that Mr. Moses lays before us only increase our sense of failure and futility; surely, with so many shots at the mark, our dramatists should have come a little nearer the bulls'-eye!

It is true enough that these wretched, claptrap dramas reflect American life—or certain phases of it; and if one have the misfortune to be the sort of person known as the future historian, there is a certain interest in watching Major Robert Rogers flay the dirty treachery of the white man in dealing with the Indian; in listening to the first strains of "Yankee Doodle" as it rises out of John



Leacock's play, "The Fall of British Tyranny"; and in going down the line to see how Steele Mackaye treated the bolshevism of his day in "Paul Kauvar; or Anarchy," or how Bronson Howard dealt with what people used to think of as a great and inspiring theme—the Civil War—even as people nowadays look for a great literature to arise out of the stench and filth of the recent war. Alas! the only play that has even a faint flavour of interest for anyone but the miserable historian, is "Rip Van Winkle"; and such interest as it has arises in some measure from the fact that it is the simulacrum of a work written with genuine literary charm, and in part because this is one of the few folk-themes that has spread its roots in the community. One turns aside from this sad exhibition, and wonders what special conditions in the American milieu or in the traditions of our stage make the memory of all these plays so much less exhilarating and delightful than the memory, let us say, of P. T. Barnum's circus.

PERHAPS one of the reasons that the drama in America was so long a cheap and pinchbeck form of entertainment was that our heart was elsewhere; our chief dramatic presentation in the theatre was the lecture rather than the play. Outside the one or two cities of the Eastern seaboard where regular theatricals flourished, it must have been pretty hard, up to a few years ago, to clap together the necessary footlights and canvas to serve as backgrounds for plays in the contemporary mode; and so the lecture conformed more simply to the physical restrictions of the American town. It is not perhaps altogether wide of the mark to look upon Emerson and Artemus Ward and Mark Twain and Henry Ward Beecher as the chief American dramatists of their time; dramatists whose sole defect was that their plays were cast for a single part and were set forth as monologue. Instead of embodying their views and insights into human life in imaginary characters, these remarkable men embodied the characters themselves; and their reflections, humorous or didactic, took the form of long soliloquies. Is it far fetched to suggest that the men who were intellectually and culturally capable of writing plays in our elder America found it more easy and profitable to do a turn of their own; and so they left the field to men of inferior capacity who devoted their ingenuity to giving the public what the public seemed to want?

THE result of all this is at hand in Mr. Montrose Moses's compendium. While Emerson and Mark Twain created out of their own clay remarkable personalities, and influenced a hundred audiences up and down the Lyceum circuit, one searches the history of the drama in America in vain for a single great character—indeed, for a single outstanding rogue! Dr. Stockmann, Andrew Undershaft, the Admirable Crichton, Christy Mahon—there is not a solitary person in the work of our earlier dramatists who is worthy of being a valet to these heroes! A survey of this Sahara of our literature may perhaps help us to see a little more clearly what we must demand of the American dramatist. It is plain that our need is not for playwrights who will reflect American life; for there has never really been any dearth of mirrors; and indeed, it is impossible to avoid reflecting, consciously or unconsciously, the life that one knows best. What we need, rather, are dramatists who will reflect *on* life; men who will create new individuals, new types, new heroes; in short, dramatists who will provide us not with mirrors but with moulds. There has been a promise of the sort of thing that will enrich the current stage in Mr. Percy Mackaye's "The Scarecrow," in Mr. Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape," and in a study of our hard, backwoods Protestantism, called "John Hawthorne," which was

hooted off the Theatre Guild's stage a year or so back, as a result of some atrocious first-night acting. Should plays of this kind become current, our "Representative Plays by American Dramatists" may not simply be representative of America; they may also be representative of literature itself.

JOURNEYMAN.

## THE THEATRE.

### "THE MACHINE-STORMERS."

MAX REINHARDT's huge and shambling theatre recently smouldered to an intenser red than the dull Pompeiian madder tint in which it had been dyed by its architect, Hans Poelzig. The playhouse grew hot from within. A volcanic drama, a feverish audience and the lightning-laden atmosphere which hung vibrating over Berlin shortly after the murder of Walther Rathenau, served to convert it into a kind of furnace. The metaphor is not forced; for apart from the dramatic, emotional, and political combustibles, a furnace of iron, glaring with reverberating cherry-coloured fire, burned like Moloch on the central stage in the last act.

All this inflammable stuff was provided by a drama called "Die Maschinenstürmer"—the "Machine-Stormers." It was given a ceremonial birth in this big show-house, but it was conceived amidst much spiritual suffering in a fortress-prison. Exposed to the fervours that throbbed from these lines, one half expected the stalactite forms of stucco in the great vault over the auditorium to melt and crumble. One was surprised on emerging under the stars again, that the proletarian agony that went forth from this limbo of want, hunger and sorrow, this mill in which human grist was ground before one's very eyes by a new Fate—the Machine—had not pierced the walls of the Grosses Schauspielhaus (which now appeared more or less blood-stained), and stunned the prurient pleasure-chasers in the streets.

The theme was English—the Luddite riots at Nottingham in 1816—seen through the eyes of one of the most tumultuous literary forces of the German revolution. "The Machine-Stormers," by Ernst Toller, is agitation in its most intensive dramatic-demagogic form. It is a bitter, sulphurous sermon by a proletarian on the peak to the peon-proletarian in the deeps. The *motif* and the action move back and forth with something of the implacable monotony of a pacing, puffing, screeching, clanking machine. Monotony here becomes an æsthetic danger with which the young dramatist had not reckoned; the danger that evolves when poignancy becomes too regularly reiterant, that is, mechanical. We then react more slowly to each successive shock, more slowly and more dully.

These dingy masses of Nottingham weavers, fluttering in thin rags like so many scarecrows of the slums, are like sheep marched by machinery to the Chicagoan shambles. Yet these sheep rebelled against the machinery because it was new and strange. This living raw material of the dawn of the nineteenth century was fed into the wheels of this latter-day play, and one saw that the problem was as ancient as human society, that there had always been endless ribbons revolving, now faster, now slower, carrying the working masses towards the great grey hoppers.

Toller is still too young to have rounded out his dramatic mastership, and the propagandist often halts the dramatist in the mid-career of the dialogue. Here and there, despite the stormy independence of the lines, we hear echoes, catch the accents of other and older



men; Hauptmann in "The Weavers"—Toller risked an all-too-obvious parallel here—Georg Kaiser in his apotheosis of the mechanical; Shaw, too, but a burning and rapturous Shaw.

"The Machine-Stormers" is a monotonous yet tense threnody and epic of pain and labour. The light that streaks across it, lies in the radiance of the message which Toller gives to the mystic, half-crazed sage, Old Man Reaper, who ambles prophetically in the spirit of a Shakespearean clown through the play, seeking the solution in the Bible, and then, in sudden outbursts of wrath, pointing his stick like a gun at God: "We must help one another and be kind."

The Machine descends upon the poor little world of these workers. They behold in it only the primitive dragon devouring their work, their livelihood, their lives, and spawning more misery and hunger. The children cry for bread. So there comes upon them the hot, primitive, most natural impulse to destroy the monster. Jim Cobbet, a workman with a vision widened and clarified by travel, seeks to aid the weavers by other means. He warns them of the ultimate triumph of the Machine, but is overruled and overborne and meets the fate of most saviours. Toller, despite his passion for the proletariat, is not blind to the fact that it, too, is Moloch, and Machine.

The play needs a big canvas and so it spreads itself over the whole vast stage, fore-stage and central amphitheatre. The Prologue opens upon the gloom in the hall of the House of Lords: a grey vacuity, shafts of mote-laden light, the white-wigged, blue-robed Chancellor lying like a corpse in a grotesque attitude in his great chair. Beside him, to left and right, there are two speakers; before them, in the murk, dimly revealed at intervals, phantom-like, bewigged members of the House of Lords. A bill is to be voted upon: "Whosoever destroys a machine shall pay for it with his life." Young Lord Byron, making his maiden speech, protests against the bill in fine humane heroics; Lord Castlereagh brings the spirit of power and crushing utilitarianism of the time to bear upon the members; balloting takes place, the bill is passed, the session dissolves like smoke.

The first scene opens in a public square in Nottingham. The setting is by Herzfelde; a Gargantuan child's play-box, ramshackle, semi-expressionistic. Two scarlet gallows erected by the workers to hang "traitors" in effigy brand themselves upon the eyes of the audience. Children whimper for bread as Jim Cobbet comes back, pack on back. The ring-leaders make furious harangues, the effigies are hanged after the question has been put and judgment delivered. The words are shot forth from the crowd's lips like bullets; clenched fists and bare arms are thrust out above the sea of tousled heads. Cobbet speaks and is hailed as a prophet and leader—to the discomfiture of the deposed mob-masters. Then one sees the hovels of the weavers; torn, gaping shells of attics behind the triangles of cheerless crumbling gables; whimpering children; wailing women; men, mute or cursing. Old Reaper wildly consults his ponderous Bible, chatters, and challenges God with his staff as with a rifle, through the rents in the roof. Through some symbolic fancy on the part of Toller, the faces of Lord Byron and Lord Castlereagh are repeated in the faces of Jim Cobbet and Mr. Ure, the manufacturer. The struggle between the Mass and the Machine is paralleled by the struggle between Jim Cobbet and Ure, between Jim Cobbet and his brother Henry Cobbet, Ure's manager, between Jim Cobbet and his utilitarian mother, and between Jim Cobbet and his fellow-

weavers. The Machine, though an ever-present, immanent threat, remains hidden. Only in the last scene does it emerge—overwhelmingly!

A most striking stage-picture was furnished by Ure's villa. This was a pompous, glaring mansion in blood-red brick and white marble, with grotesque, square-cut trees and hedges, fantastic hollyhocks; flaring steps and porch, all cut off from the street by a forbidding iron fence which presents its barbed rods like so many javelins held "at attention." The mob of weavers' wives assembles before this fortress of profit and respectability, like a bank of smoke. Mary, the fair-haired wife of one of the weavers, escapes from the mansion. Ha! Henry Cobbet's light-o'-love, selling herself for food! There is swift justice upon her at the hands of the furious women. Old Man Reaper reaches wonderful heights in his heart-racking apostrophes to God.

Then Henry Cobbet appears upon the steps, and harangues the women. Words and cries volley back and forth: "We want bread!" An emotional storm swoops down upon us from this scene. In its violent strophe and antistrophe; in the isolation of the one figure; in the invisible presence of law and order; in the visible, spiked, iron equator that separates two worlds; and in the visible ramparts of class and privilege; in the toil-worn, rebellious apparitions from the deeps, eaten by hunger and full of fear and hatred of the new Frankenstein; there is something of the stature of Shakespeare or Æschylus.

The last picture is one of the most grandiose ever built up on the modern stage. It is the birth, the apotheosis of the Mechanistic Age. We are confronted by, almost sucked into, the interior of the enormous Machine Hall. It is vaulted like an observatory; great, curved, latticed openings are visible in the dimness of the cupola, with the leaden firmament of Nottingham glowering through. Under this basks the Machine, the primitive engine of 1816, triumphant, bright, against the gloom of the background; a living mechanism, bathed in shimmering light, radiant in green, scarlet and bedecked with brazen bands and belts. It has ponderous upright boilers, a walking-beam, a tremendous red fly-wheel, ladders and galleries for the engineer, a substructure of brick, and furnace-doors red and roaring with flame. Smoke pours from the stack, drifts of steam lie stratawise across engine and stage—like clouds across El Capitan in the Yosemite.

The Machine hums and pants, clanks and throbs, thumping rhythmically. Now and again the hand of the officiating priest, that is, the Engineer, pulls a long cord and unlooses the hoarse, reverberating organ-note of the siren. The looms rattle and click to right and left. Little children are sitting before the beams, like galley-slaves at the oars.

Below this engine-terrace the Weavers gather like a thunder-cloud, men and women led on by Ned Ludd and his adjutants. In vain Jim Cobbet confronts them, and exhorts them to reason, bidding them remember that the new monster must be mastered, not destroyed. "The tyrant Machine, conquered by the spirit of creative man, will become your tool, your servant."

He is shouted at, then struck down; Ludd triumphs. The crowd, with hammers, clubs and crow-bars, storms forward over him. The Machine is attacked, battered, broken. The great fly-wheel stops, the steam-siren groans like the voice of a wounded thing. The engineer flies to his gallery and goes mad, grows wildly prophetic—touched with a vision of the future. He pours forth, as from a pulpit, ecstatic, semi-biblical



eloquence upon the wreckers, punctuating his periods by the bourdon-note of the steam-whistle.

Jim Cobbet dies, his face and brow are marble, like those of the dying Byron, and his last words are full of mingled love and bitterness: "You will follow only the man who whips you into liberation!" Then the mechanism of the State comes to protect the mechanism of industry; a rolling of drums supplants the rolling of the Machine. Soldiers file in: the short, sharp bark of military commands is more potent than all oratory; the mechanism of the rifle is master over the mechanism of mere muscle.

The problem of Man and the Machine is not solved in this play pitched in the industrial England of 1816, for it is not solved even to-day. Perhaps there are feasible solutions, economic, sociological, political. But at present one sees only that embodied in the words of Old Man Reaper, moaning over the dead body of Jim Cobbet, charging God with all the incongruity of the world and hysterically crying forth his refrain: "We must help one another and be kind."

HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

### THE CASE OF THE "LUSITANIA."

SIRS: The written refusal of the *New York World* to print the enclosed letter seems to me to give that document a value which is as high as it is extrinsic. The letter was sent to the *World* on 6 December. It was returned to me, more than two weeks later, with the ingenuous comment that "The Editor of the *World* regrets that he can not make use of the matter you have kindly offered." Unless I am wrong, you will relish this hand-picked proof of your contention that news is the last refuge of a newspaper. I am, etc.,

New York City.

WINTHROP PARKHURST.

(Enclosure)

To the Editor of the *World*: On 1 May, 1915, the "Lusitania" set sail from New York and was sunk a few days later, presumably by a German torpedo, off Kinsale Head, Ireland. The fact that she sank is certain, and the presumptive cause of her sinking also seems certain. Therefore I shall waste no time speculating over the margin of potential error which conceivably exists while this maritime corpse lies at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. However, for more than seven years there had existed some doubt in various quarters as to whether the "Lusitania" was armed; and this doubt was increased both by the importance of discovering that truth and by the contradictory testimony which was offered by excited witnesses. It therefore required a little time for the witnesses to become less excited and for the question as to whether the "Lusitania" was really armed to become, finally, a subject that could be rationally and soberly examined into by the best and the serenest minds in the country. And it therefore, again, is a matter for national self-congratulation that these serene and noble minds should not have indulged in precipitate action, but should have waited exactly seven years, seven months and three days before making their ultimate statement.

That statement, setting all minds at rest at last, was published in the *World* on 4 December, 1922. The statement itself, it is true, was made on 4 June, 1915, by Dudley Field Malone and was handed at that time to Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo. But time never yet hurt any truth, and seven years or so will even improve a good one; so it is, I can not but think, a tribute to the sovereign good judgment and patience of our vested authorities that they let this one age in the wood before decanting it for the public's delectation.

The truth to which I refer, and to which you gave a two-column head-line in your issue of 4 December, 1922, was submitted in answer to a question. The question to which it replied ran as follows: "When the 'Lusitania' sailed from New York on her last trip to England did she or did she not have guns on board, mounted on the underdecks and masked?" And the reply to that question—the truth which until 4 Decem-

ber, 1922, had been kept a State secret—ran verbatim as follows:

"When the 'Lusitania' sailed from the Port of New York on 1 May, 1915, on her last trip to England, she did not have any guns of any calibre or description on any deck or decks, on her stern or bow, mounted or unmounted, masked or unmasked. This statement is made of my own official knowledge and is based upon the statements and affidavits of. . ." And here follow immediately the names of a galaxy of public officials, among whom are so many United States Inspectors of Customs that one is diverted from the issue in hand for a moment in sheer wonder that anything gets into, not to speak of getting out of, this country without official cognition.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that on 1 May, 1915, something escaped these officials' attention; and that something was a gun. Undoubtedly it was concealed in the hold of the "Lusitania" until she got away from her pier. But on the "Lusitania," somewhere, it must have been at the time she slipped away, because when she reached lower New York it chanced that a Staten Island ferry passed almost directly under the "Lusitania's" stern and by that time a gun had already been mounted on her rear deck, visible to anyone who would look at it. And this fact has been reported to me by a friend of unimpeachable integrity, of impeccable eyesight and of such lofty indifference to the wrangling chicanery of politicians that he will not take the trouble even to throw his information into the cauldron of chauvinistic stew.

However, though I can vouch for the utter veracity of this story, I do not expect you immediately to believe it. I therefore merely make an appeal to you to publish this letter and let as many other witnesses as will do so come forward. There were other passengers aboard the Staten Island ferry, referred to, on 1 May, 1915, and undoubtedly they were not all blind. If, in addition to having eyes, they have any interest in for ever laying an official statement of the United States Government, which appears to be the most colossal prevarication to come out of the war, such witnesses will unquestionably take the stand.

You have already given considerable space and importance to the Government's side of the story. Let us find out if the obverse of this story, when we reverse it, does not turn up on the side that is true. (Signed) WINTHROP PARKHURST.

### THE ULTERIOR MOTIVE.

SIRS: An item of news carried by the papers on Christmas Eve credits Judge Gary with the statement that, while it is desirable to shorten the twelve-hour day in the steel-industry, it is impossible to do so at the present time. Under existing conditions, such a change would make it difficult for him to meet the competitive prices of the Germans in the world's markets. Some two or three weeks ago, Hugo Stinnes, addressing Germany on the state of that nation, demonstrated conclusively that if Germany is to meet the economic world on a footing of equality, her working population must add two hours to its work-day.

The attentive reader of the two statements will have little difficulty in discovering the ground common to both. Both gentlemen are convinced that the salvation of the civilized world depends upon the encouragement of a healthy competition between the employees of the one and the employees of the other. Of course, each of them is patriotic enough to hope that his own forces will outdo those of the other; but there can be no question whatever concerning the soundness and correctness of their principle, since it serves equally the ends of humanity, of patriotism and, incidentally, of personal gain. Could there be a principle more compelling? I am, etc.,

New York City.

MORRIS HALPERN.

### A CHOICE OF EVILS: II.

SIRS: In reply to the letter from Miss Irma Hochstein, of Madison, Wisconsin, published in your issue of 6 December, I would like to point out one or two errors of reasoning which lead her to a wrong conclusion.

Miss Hochstein brings out the point that in framing equal-rights legislation along the lines advocated by the National Woman's party, there arises the question of deciding on the best method of law-making. She begins the illustration of her position by quoting the blanket equal-rights law passed



by the Wisconsin Legislature, and then proceeds to assert that the Wisconsin law expects the blanket-statement to cover everything, but that some one must decide how much and what the statement shall cover. This decision, she says, is left to the courts, but the courts are not favourable in all cases to women's-rights legislation. On this basis she argues that women would be wiser to follow the law-making procedure of States where an attempt is being made to reduce judicial interpretation of legislation to a minimum. In other words, women should seek the passage of specific laws to right specific wrongs, thus permitting the legislature in each instance to make the decision, and reducing to a minimum the danger of prejudiced interpretation by the courts.

The logical conclusion to be drawn from Miss Hochstein's remarks is that she disapproves of the attitude of the National Woman's party in supporting a proposal for a Federal Constitutional amendment in blanket form, to remove the legal disabilities of women. As she proclaims that she speaks for a considerable number of Wisconsin women, it is reasonable to conclude that she feels that the women of that State are not entirely satisfied with the Wisconsin law as it stands.

Now Miss Hochstein has proceeded upon at least two wrong premises in her reasoning. She asserts that the courts must interpret the blanket-statement law. Then why should she take it for granted that the courts would not be called upon to interpret each specific law passed to right a specific wrong? The larger the number of laws to be interpreted, the larger the number of possibilities for prejudiced decisions. Miss Hochstein also appears to take it for granted that specific laws to right specific wrongs could and would cover all possible contingencies. Experience has taught that such can not be the case.

As for the attitude of Wisconsin women towards the equal rights law of that State, I believe that Miss Hochstein has gone too far in intimating that Wisconsin women in general are not entirely satisfied with it. Here are one or two examples of the way the law has worked:

Miss Hochstein herself has cited the case of the Wisconsin woman who moved with her husband to Montana, where he engaged in the mining-business. When their son was of college age, this woman returned to Wisconsin to live, so that he might enter the State university. The husband remained with his business in Montana. The university ruled that as the husband's residence was in Montana, the wife also lived in Montana, that the boy was therefore non-resident and must pay tuition. It was not until after the Wisconsin equal-rights law was brought forward that the university ruled that the wife lived where she lived.

There was a woman living in Richland Centre, Wisconsin, who was deprived of her right to vote because, although she and her husband lived in town with their children, the husband kept his voting-residence in the rural district where their farm lay. She could not leave her young children to go to the country to vote, and had not voted since the passage of the national suffrage amendment. Under the equal-rights law she was enabled to vote in the town where she lived.

In view of the facts as stated, does it not seem reasonable to believe that the blanket-statement law, or a Federal amendment for that matter, is after all the best to be had for the purposes sought? I am, etc.,

New York City.

ALETA ESTES MUNGER.

## BOOKS.

### THE POTTER'S THUMB.

WHILE he lived, William De Morgan gave us good measure; and it is only fitting that the biography<sup>1</sup> so long awaited should be a voluminous one, informed with something of the protean qualities of his literary work. It is discursive, and De Morgan was never in a hurry (using the phrase of a late distinguished literary agent) to "cut the cackle and come to the 'osses." It is digressive, and it was not the least of the veteran novelist's achievements that at a time when publishers were chastening the neophyte with shibboleths of "punch" and "pep," caught at second-hand from trans-Atlantic connexions, he succeeded in imposing upon them that leisurely ambient in which the British novel moves most naturally. A life whose elements were so disproportionately mingled was

bound to entail very special difficulties on its biographer, and it can not be thought that every one will be satisfied at the way Mrs. Stirling has met them. Those who hailed the series of novels beginning with "Joseph Vance," as the rising of a literary star of first magnitude, will feel that she has given us a little too much of De Morgan the potter, and correspondingly little of De Morgan the novelist. Those whom affection for the gentle and garrulous old annalist of mid-Victorian manners has never deluded into any misconception of his literary rank, will probably be the most indulgent. They would ill spare one paragraph of the long prologue whose testimony to a whole-hearted self-effacement in the cause of beauty, seems to reach us from the golden era of craftsmanship.

De Morgan's family-background was rich and colourful. His blood was of the generous Huguenot strain which repaid Britain so amply for its protection, filling its crafts with skilled workers and its far-flung armies with professional soldiers who worked at their profession. The Empire took heavy toll of the novelist's immediate forebears. A great-grandfather was blown up in the taking of Pondicherry, a grand-uncle disappeared in a cavalry-skirmish with Tippoo Sultan's troops, two uncles were drowned, and the family-records lost in the wreck of home-coming East Indians; and the writer's father was disqualified for continuing the family tradition of military service by a tropical disease which resulted in the loss of an eye.

It is probably from this father, Augustus De Morgan, the distinguished mathematician, that the son inherited the stubborn unworldliness that marked his long battle for the arts against Philistinism. The sire refused the opportunities for advancement that the older universities would have afforded him, rather than subscribe to the religious tests then demanded, leaving his confession of faith in the divinity of Christ to be read from his will at a time when it could no longer be "the way up in the world." Taking a chair in mathematics at the newly-founded non-sectarian University of London, Professor De Morgan settled down with his wife, who was the daughter of William Frend, an actuary and ex-clergyman, in a modest house in Gower Street, where that erratic tribune of the people, Sir Francis Burdett, Lord Brougham, Coleridge, Browning and Wordsworth were familiar guests. It is pleasant to recall that in Charlotte Street near by, at about the same time, and round a still humbler professorial hearth, refugees whose social rank ranged from marquis to image-seller were gathering nightly to read Dante and scheme for a united Italy, entertained by their frugal hostess with thick slices of bread and butter, and coffee, while little Gabriel and Michael Rossetti listened, wide-eyed and wondering.

In the British middle class of to-day, riddled by tawdry ideals, shams and "swank," such a circle as Mrs. Stirling draws for us would not only be undiscoverable but inconceivable. The father, absorbed in his texts and theses, is rather a shadowy figure. But the mother, Sophia De Morgan, stands out with a fine distinctness. Of advanced views, as befitted the daughter of a pastor whom intellectual integrity had exiled from Cambridge and Episcopacy, she was part founder of Bedford College for women, a fellow-worker with Elizabeth Fry in prison- and workhouse-reform, and a pioneer for woman suffrage. Devoted to her six children, she keeps a nursery journal in which "peccadilloes and corrections" are chronicled day by day, together with phrenological charts of the

<sup>1</sup> "William De Morgan and His Wife." A. M. W. Stirling. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$6.00.



young De Morgans. The family write verses and parodies after the manner of Edward Lear, give concerts of chamber music, exchange whimsical letters ornamented with pen-and-ink drawings, and dabble in psychic phenomena. Worldly advancement, far less social climbing, does not enter into the De Morgans' scheme of life. It is significant that in a long letter written by the professor to his son on the selection of a career, financial reward is never once mentioned as a motive that should influence his choice. Imperialism, the stock-market and the "stunt" press have ravaged all this, once and for all.

After a brief study at the academy schools, which seems at first blush a mistaken locale in which to test an artistic vocation, William De Morgan compromised by selecting the more formal field of stained glass. The relics of this period, we are told, still attest a flair for recovering lost processes through sheer force of honest workmanship. The long and financially disastrous essay in tile-making began with a re-discovery of iridescent Persian glaze in 1872; and from this time on for nearly thirty years, De Morgan's history becomes an Odyssey from one suburban kiln to another, generally marked by unforeseen accidents and never far from the ragged edge of bankruptcy.

Probably no enterprise has ever been conducted with so complete a disregard for commercial foresight or decorum. The first kiln set fire to a house in Fitzroy Square. A second fire narrowly missed destroying an old house at Chelsea, to which the tile works were removed. At Wandsworth, an error in measurements entailed the rebuilding of the ovens and wiped out all profits on the first big order. With an absorption in production so complete that meals were often forgotten went an apparently absolute indifference to its eventual disposal; though there was a vague and typically Victorian dream of whole streets eventually to glow in myriad-hued tile-fronts. There was no sales-organization, the pottery being sold at haphazard by such local stores as would take it on consignment. There were weeks when the employees went wageless because checks had been distributed unsigned. Royal patrons called, exhibited a typical instance of royal meanness, and were sent snubbed away. Pieces of ceramic of which De Morgan had grown fond were withdrawn from sale. At other times, a sort of orgy of destruction seized upon the eccentric master potter. An afternoon was spent on the eve of the removal to Wandsworth in putting a hammer through dishes and vases over whose fusing he had hung like a mother over a cradle, while limy assistants were bidden, "Help yourselves, boys." A business conducted on similar lines to-day, and skilfully press-agented, might make its fortune by dint of sheer oddity. But the nineteenth century had not learned that everything, even eccentricity can be capitalized, nor was De Morgan the man to teach it. Hand in hand with this commercial charivari, up to the very end, went improvements and new processes. The pottery produced before the final failure, Mrs. Stirling tells us, was the most beautiful of all. De Morgan had inherited an inventive brain, and had enough "notions" to make fortunes for three shrewd Yankees. An improvement in the visual field of binoculars, used by the Germans during the war, and the first free wheel for bicycles, were among the discoveries he never troubled himself to patent; and he was working on a design for an improved airplane at the time of his death.

Unalloyed domestic happiness came to the ageing craftsman through his marriage with Miss Evelyn Pickering, herself an artist of talent within the narrow

Burne-Jones formulæ into which Pre-Raphaelitism had hardened. But it seemed that the utilitarian world to whose rules he would not subscribe, was always to be pressing on De Morgan's heels. During an illness of his wife, an avalanche of bricks and mortar overwhelmed the Vale, a little oasis of park trees and old-world gardens in Chelsea, where he had set up his home; and when the couple finally migrated to Italy in search of health and peace, they stepped across their doomed threshold into a wilderness of demolition. In Florence, amid fresh difficulties and complications, manfully grappled with for a time by means of code-instructions to the Chelsea kiln, and samples of special thinness sent through the mail, the hapless adventure finally flickered out. The tiles and bowls that none would buy, found their way into museums, dealers' hands and the collections of the wealthy. The craftsmen whom De Morgan had taught to make them, took to driving motor-cars and trolleys. Ichabod!

It was during this Italian interlude that it was my own good fortune to meet William De Morgan. The occasion was an "artists' revel" in a hospitable studio on the Tornabuoni, where the outstanding feature was the wearing of more or less symbolic wreaths by the guests. Under De Morgan's garland of ivy leaves, the domed and fragile brow, the iron-grey beard, the whimsical and rather wild eye, the long and sensitive nostrils, assumed a druidic and hierocratic air. He was gay and garrulous, entering with zest into the somewhat childish fun and artistic small beer. But in repose, the lines of his face were eloquent of fatigue and ill health. He had the indefinable air of those who have accepted defeat and are looking forward, not ungratefully, to the close of its aftermath.

As a matter of fact, that phase of his life which was to make his name a household word with English-speaking readers, had not yet begun. The history of "Joseph Vance" is familiar. Scribbled on notebooks and the backs of washing-lists as a relaxation for empty hours of illness, its merits were perceived by the faithful and appreciative wife. Publishers shied, not unnaturally, at the pile of manuscript a foot and a half high into which it was expanded. But De Morgan was deaf as ever to worldly counsels, and his stubbornness for once was justified when his novel, unabridged, took the reading world by storm. He enjoyed his success frankly and unreservedly. He wrote with extraordinary facility. Letters from all over the world poured in upon the lonely old writer, as once they had done on the prim author of "Clarissa Harlowe" in near-by Fulham; and, like Richardson, he was never aloof, always ready to discuss his Lossies and Gwens and Sallies with the far-away friends they had made for him. His sensibilities were not wrung by the jargon of "royalties" and "large printings." At times, he spoke of using his literary profits to start the all-devouring kilns once more, but it never so happened, and perhaps in the end he would not have wished it. No publisher ever prevailed upon him to "tighten" his style, but he was grateful for criticism, and especially for any *ex post facto* justifications of his bizarre plots. One departure from his popular medium he made, an historical novel of the seventeenth century, hailed by a benighted *Fortnightly* reviewer as serious work. But the reading-public had grown accustomed to its De Morganisms; it would have its De Morganisms; and with a chuckle, the lovable old author took up his fountain pen and gave again of his inexhaustible store to that generous, whimsical and many-headed monster. He became something of a national figure. His views were sought on woman



suffrage, on preparedness for war; he was invited to take the chair at Dickens celebrations; he engaged in a controversy on rubrics with a polemical Redemptorist. His accessibility, in the end, was the cause of his death. An officer on leave, determined to see in the flesh the writer whose books had eased hours of drudgery at the front, called, was hospitably entertained, and left behind him the seeds of deadly trench-fever. Seventeen days later, and after a week of delirium during which this descendant of many brave soldiers fancied himself a soldier in the fighting line, William De Morgan lay dead.

In assigning a place in literature to De Morgan's work, or in intimating how far in real significance he falls short of even such fleeting and frustrate Victorian figures as Dowson or James Douglas, it is impossible altogether to dissociate the belated essay in letters from the long life that preceded it. Harsh things a-plenty have been said about the insufficiency of the younger writers, but it is not altogether a misfortune that until the hard lesson of selection has been learned, the substance that is to be given literary form should be meagre. De Morgan's own content, the accumulation of sixty years of unremitting observation and experience, was prodigious. It burst and overran the mould into which it was poured; and the result is something strangely formless and chaotic, with only here and there a provokingly perfect fragment of contour projecting from the mass. His digressions are inveterate. One may read the long novels from cover to cover with sustained interest (they are really no harder to read than shorter and duller romances) and yet have the sense, as the last page is turned, not so much that a human experience has been achieved as that a vast clamour has suddenly ceased. He might be termed the master of the reverberant style, in which the echoes blur the measure. His humour is authentic, but marred by that relish for witless persiflage which all the Pre-Raphaelites shared, and which led them to correspond with one another in misspelled cockney English. It is plain that he was never subject to any kind of discipline, but triumphed, as he had failed, entirely on his own terms. He had little sense of proportion. He can not note the buzzing of a fly on a pane without surmising that "like the Bourbons," it had "learned nothing and forgotten nothing." He devotes pages to the locutory efforts of a stammering child.

De Morgan undoubtedly possessed much of the equipment of a great artist in words. To be convinced of this, it is necessary only to study the work of his imitators, who have succeeded in aping his mannerisms without capturing the secret of his charm. Had the call to write polarized itself round some experience still poignant, or some disillusion still hotly resented, it is more than possible that great literature would have been the result. But he was sixty-five years old before he took pen in hand. He had learned all too well the lesson that life is a workaday affair, and that anticlimax is its norm. His sympathies were grown over-broad. He could not bear to allot to any of his creations a minor or a silent rôle, so his action is held up at every moment by actors who must speak their little piece and take their little "hand." A certain impatience is of the method of those who paint on the grand scale; illumination and arabesque are the resource of the serene and resigned. We can be thankful that in his case the decorations are so gracious and the hues so vivid and real. For many years to come, tired folk will be glad to hold his hand and take their ease between the clipped hedges of his innocent

labyrinths. With him at least, they need never be afraid. The company with which they will find themselves face to face at every turn and twist, is of the very salt of the earth. De Morgan was unworldly by deliberate choice, but never naive. He knew the society in which his life was spent, through and through; and his aversions to all that is mean and insincere are instant and instinctive. He wrote of his youth, of the great Victorian period which, for all its misplaced complacency and loose thinking, had a hopefulness and elasticity denied to our ruthless age. Possibly on a final estimate his most competent achievement will prove to have been just this—to have shown us how much that was sunny and essentially sane the resistless wheel has ground into dust, in order that we might be brought face to face with the stark alternative of solving our problems or perishing with them.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

### SUPERMODERNISM.

NATURALLY those whose opinions in political and economic matters may properly be called liberal, are apt to have sympathy for those who in theology pursue truth fearlessly, regardless of ecclesiastical restrictions. To such persons those who call themselves Modernists—such men as Loisy, Tyrrell, Schnitzer, Rashdall, Major, Inge, Bethune-Baker and Clutton-Brock—have made a continuous and for the most part successful appeal, on the ground that they are free and daring re-interpreters to the modern mind of a Christianity long enslaved in outworn definition. Even those who have never read a word written by any of these gentlemen or their associates, have commonly absorbed many of their well-advertised ideas, and look with impatience on those who question their wisdom. There is a certain type of liberal mind which is impatient of quarrels over words, which contemns careful definitions, which suspects logical systems. It can not understand how men have contended, even to blood, over whether Jesus is *homoousios* or *homoiousios* with God the Father; it indulges in sarcastic comment on "warring over an iota"; it fails to appreciate how reasoning from that iota or from its absence can logically develop two utterly differing theologies, and ultimately two theories of morals. To such persons—and they constitute a large percentage of contemporary men and women—it has been refreshing to find theologians who scorned such tiny tests of orthodoxy, and bade us be charitable towards differences in faith, "since we are all seeking the same goal anyway." So commonly has this attitude towards religion become associated with liberalism in general, that those who profess or believe the Nicene creed, and yet are fearlessly radical, have to many seemed anomalies. It has been difficult to explain Chesterton and Gore and Belloc and Ronald Knox and John Ryan.

Now there comes upon the scene one<sup>1</sup> who attacks all these modernist Christians, who have so long maintained their sole compatibility with the contemporary mind, not because they are unorthodox and heretical, but on the ground that they are not modern; that they are behind the times, that they are tied up with an Hegelian philosophy which has not stood the test of time and is, in all realms save that of theology, being rapidly discarded. No method of attack can possibly vex the modernists more than this. It will be remembered how, in "Man and Superman," Tanner irritated Mr. Ramsden, that estimable political and economic liberal, by insinuating that his ideas, advanced in 1880, had become hopelessly obsolete in

<sup>1</sup> "Creeds or No Creeds?" Charles Harris. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$6.00.



1900. One can imagine the rage and contempt of Dean Inge and his confrères as they are told by Mr. Harris that their daring religious liberalism of 1900 has become old beyond hope in 1922.

This paper is not a journal of theology, and therefore will not attempt to analyse or estimate in detail the statements of Mr. Harris. Merely in passing, one can not help saying that possibly the author is sometimes too ready to make sweeping classifications of his opponents. With his chief contention, that the Modernist is a man who is trying to be a Christian and an agnostic at one and the same time, and that he is apt to be ridiculous while doing it, it is hard to quarrel. One honours such men as Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, for having frankly admitted the inadequacy of straddling as a mode of solving theological difficulties, and gone on to a more thorough negation of Christianity; though why they should still hold on to positions in the ministries of churches which definitely believe what they definitely deny, is hard for the non-clerical observer to understand. To vary somewhat a Chestertonian comparison, the Christianity of the Nicene Creed is like good ale (I trust that prohibitionist Christians will not object to the parallel) and agnosticism is like good, cold water. Each is admirable by itself; but only one of questionable taste will offer watered ale as a substitute for either.

At any rate, this book may well be read by thinking people of non-theological connexions and activities. From it they will learn a great deal worth knowing about the present situation in Christendom, and they will see from a new and interesting angle, attitudes towards abstract truth and its ethical consequences, which have lately been decried as obscurantist.

BERNARD IDDINGS BELL.

### DISILLUSION AS DOGMA.

THE DIAL's award to Mr. T. S. Eliot and the subsequent book-publication of his "The Waste Land" have occasioned a display of some of the most enthusiastically naïve superlatives that have ever issued from publicly sophisticated iconoclasts. A group, in attempting to do for Mr. Eliot what "Ulysses" did for Mr. Joyce, has, through its emphatic reiterations, driven more than one reader to a study rather than a celebration of the qualities that characterize Mr. Eliot's work and endear him to the younger cerebralists. These qualities, apparent even in his earlier verses, are an elaborate irony, a twitching disillusion, a persistent though muffled hyperæsthesia. In "The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and the extraordinarily sensitized "Portrait of a Lady," Mr. Eliot fused these qualities in a flexible music, in the shifting nuances of a speech that wavered dexterously between poetic colour and casual conversation. In the greater part of "Poems," however, Mr. Eliot employed a harder and more crackling tone of voice; he delighted in virtuosity for its own sake, in epigrammatic velleities, in an incongruously mordant and disillusioned *vers de société*.

In "The Waste Land,"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eliot has attempted to combine these two contradictory idioms with a new complexity. The result—although, as I am aware, this conclusion is completely at variance with the judgment of its frenetic admirers—is a pompous parade of erudition, a lengthy extension of the earlier disillusion, a kaleidoscopic movement in which the bright-coloured pieces fail to atone for the absence of an integrated design. As an echo of contemporary despair, as a picture of dissolution, of the breaking-down of the very structures on which life has modelled itself, "The Waste Land" has a definite authen-

ticity. But an artist is, by the very nature of creation, pledged to give form to formlessness; even the process of disintegration must be held within a pattern. This pattern is distorted and broken by Mr. Eliot's jumble of narratives, nursery-rhymes, criticism, jazz-rhythms, Dictionary of Favourite Phrases and a few lyrical moments. Possibly the disruption of our ideals may be reproduced through such a *mélange*, but it is doubtful whether it is crystallized or even clarified by a series of severed narratives—tales from which the connecting tissue has been carefully cut—and familiar quotations with their necks twisted, all imbedded in that formless plasma which Mr. Ezra Pound likes to call a Sordello-form. Some of the intrusions are more irritating than incomprehensible. The unseen sailor in the first act of "Tristan und Isolde" is dragged in (without point or preparation) to repeat his "*Frisch weht der Wind*"; in the midst of a metaphysical dialogue, we are assured

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—  
It's so elegant  
So intelligent.

Falling back on his earlier *métier*, a species of sardonic light verse, Mr. Eliot does not disdain to sink to doggerel that would be refused admission to the cheapest of daily columns:

When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone.

Elsewhere, the juxtaposition of Andrew Marvell, Paul Dresser and others equally incongruous is more cryptic in intention and even more dismal in effect:

But at my back from time to time I hear  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.  
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter  
And on her daughter  
They wash their feet in soda water  
*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

It is difficult to understand the presence of such cheap tricks in what Mr. Burton Rascoe has publicly informed us is "the finest poem of this generation." The mingling of wilful obscurity and weak vaudeville compels us to believe that the pleasure which many admirers derive from "The Waste Land" is the same sort of gratification attained through having solved a puzzle, a form of self-congratulation. The absence of any verbal acrobatics from Mr. Eliot's prose, a prose that represents not the slightest departure from a sort of intensive academicism, makes one suspect that, were it not for the Laforgue mechanism, Mr. Eliot's poetic variations on the theme of a super-refined futility would be increasingly thin and incredibly second rate.

As an analyst of desiccated sensations, as a recorder of the nostalgia of this age, Mr. Eliot has created something whose value is, at least, documentary. Yet, granting even its occasional felicities, "The Waste Land" is a misleading document. The world distrusts the illusions which the last few years have destroyed. One grants this latter-day truism. But it is groping among new ones: the power of the unconscious, an astringent scepticism, a mystical renaissance—these are some of the current illusions to which the Western World is turning for assurance of their, and its, reality. Man may be desperately insecure, but he has not yet lost the greatest of his emotional needs, the need to believe in something—even in his disbelief. For an ideal-demanding race, there is always one more God—and Mr. Eliot is not his prophet.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

<sup>1</sup>"The Waste Land." T. S. Eliot. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.



## SHORTER NOTICES.

DESPITE its brave title, "Facing Reality"<sup>1</sup> proves to be a somewhat disappointing and tiresome book of the type that the "Gentleman with a Duster" has brought into vogue in England, which admits everything, deplores everything, extenuates nothing, but in the end gives every one credit for the best intentions. Though its theme is the need for abandonment of national shams and coming to grips with facts, the author manages to evade the biggest fact of all. If anything is more real and actual in England to-day than the strangle-hold of privilege on law-courts, political power and imperial resources, we have yet to hear of it. Nor are the ethical considerations advanced by Mr. Wingfield-Stratford likely, if unassisted by something more grim and positive, ever to pry it loose. Ethics and economics are on rather sisterly terms in post-war England just now. Of course, at the first breath of actuality the racial gods will be invoked to dissolve the unholy partnership; but meantime, and as a mere matter of expediency, one can see no harm in its going on a little longer, provided that its ephemeral character be frankly recognized and that in turn the economic sister be careful not to contract the habit of slipshod thinking and rhetorical phrase with which such books as "Facing Reality" abound. Sympathy with Soviet policies confers, God knows, no particular intellectual status; nevertheless there is something in such a phrase as "the obscene flood of Bolshevism" which irremediably hall-marks its author as an alumnus from the school of thought of which William Jennings Bryan and the Rev. John Roach Straton are shining exemplars in this country.

H. L. S.

WILLIAM MCFEE thinks that the author of "Ocean Echoes,"<sup>2</sup> like the gentlemen in the play who finds that he has been speaking prose all his life, has been living romance all his life without being aware of it. Thus Mr. Mason has turned to the narration of his many adventures, as he himself phrases it, "intoxicated with the new-found use of words to evoke old scenes." Here is a most promising starting-point for a story of life at sea, but the promise is not quite borne out in the pages of this book, vivid and full of action as they are. One comes upon too many passages which possess such a high literary gloss that all the salt and sincerity seem to have been burnished off them. The suspicion that Mr. Mason is writing for effect, and not to tell his story, creeps into the mind. The autobiographer carries himself too much in the foreground with his muscles knotted, in the pose of a seafaring hero. His bravery comes out most conspicuously, not in fighting the elements, but in brawls and dock-fights. As for the self-conscious and too elaborate style, it leads the writer into such excursions of doubtful taste as this: "I was married again, but that's another story and needs atmosphere, so I'll paddle past it and survey the shores below; and some quiet evening when the muskrat's splash spreads a splatter of spray, I'll buck the stream and paddle back, and spin the yarn." The morals which are deduced from time to time, to give tone to the picaresque adventures, are not precisely revolutionary. "I was richly paid for the small service I had rendered him," he goes on, after recounting the gift of ten dollars to a seaman. "One usually is richly paid. Kindness to others is not only a pleasure that rich and poor alike can have, but frequently it is more than its own reward." In incident and in picturesqueness, "Ocean Echoes" leaves nothing to be desired; it is the poetry of life that one chiefly misses—and that comes only with the self-forgetfulness of the true story-teller. L. B.

## A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

THE Book Club of California has done a service to all lovers of good writing and fine printing in issuing a collection of the letters of Ambrose Bierce,<sup>3</sup> and I wish it were possible for more readers to possess themselves of the book. No better craftsman in words than Bierce has lived in this country for many a day, and his letters might well have introduced him to the larger public that, even now, scarcely knows his name. A public of four

<sup>1</sup> "Facing Reality." Esmé Wingfield-Stratford. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$2.50.

<sup>2</sup> "Ocean Echoes." Arthur Mason. New York: Henry Holt & Company. \$1.75.

<sup>3</sup> "The Letters of Ambrose Bierce." Edited by Bertha Clark Pope, with an Introduction by George Sterling. San Francisco: The Book Club of California. Privately printed.

hundred, however, if it happens to be a picked public, is a possession not to be despised, for the cause of an author's reputation is safer in the hands of a few Greeks than in those of a multitude of Persians. "It is not the least pleasing of my reflections," Bierce himself remarks, "that my friends have always liked my work—or me—well enough to want to publish my books at their own expense." His wonderful volume of tales, "In the Midst of Life," was rejected, strange as it seems, by virtually every publisher in the country; the list of the sponsors of his other books is a catalogue of unknown names, and the collected edition of his writings might almost have been regarded as a secret among friends. "Among what I may term 'underground reputations,'" Mr. Arnold Bennett once observed, "that of Ambrose Bierce is perhaps the most striking example." The taste, the skill and the devotion with which his letters have been edited indicate, however, that, limited as this reputation is, it is destined for a long and healthy life.

It must be said at once that all the letters in the volume were written after the author's fiftieth year. They thus throw no light upon his early career, upon his development, or even upon the most active period of his creative life, for in 1893 he had already ceased to write stories. Moreover, virtually all these letters are addressed to his "pupils," as he called them, young men and women who were interested in writing, and to whom he liked nothing better than to give advice. We never see him among his equals, his intimates or his contemporaries; he appears invariably as the benevolent uncle of the gifted beginner, and we receive a perhaps quite erroneous impression that this, in his later life, was Bierce's habitual rôle. Had he no companions of his own age, no correspondents, no ties, no society? A lonelier man, if we are to accept the testimony of this book, never existed. He speaks of having met Mark Twain, and he refers to two or three Californian writers of the older generation; he lived for many years in Washington, chiefly, as one gathers, in the company of other old army men, few of whom had ever heard that he had written a line; he mentions Percival Pollard; otherwise he seems to have had no acquaintances in the East, while with the West, with San Francisco at least, he seems to have been on the worst of terms. San Francisco, his home for a quarter of a century, he describes as "the paradise of ignorance, anarchy and general yellowness. . . . It needs," he remarks elsewhere, "another quake, another whiff of fire, and—more than all else—a steady trade wind of grapeshot." It was this latter—grapeshot is just the right word—that Bierce himself poured into that "moral penal colony," the worst, as he avers, "of all the Sodoms and Gomorrah in our modern world"; and his collection of satirical epigrams shows us how much he detested it. To him San Francisco was all that London was to Pope, the Pope of "The Dunciad"; but it was a London without any delectable Twickenham villas or learned Dr. Arbuthnots or gay visiting Voltaires. Bierce's mind had nothing upon which to feed but the few books, old and well tried, that had nourished his youth. One can only guess how much more effective his life would have been if it had been passed in a congenial atmosphere of living ideas.

To the barrenness of his environment is to be attributed, no doubt, the trivial and ephemeral character of so much of his work; for while his interests were parochial, his outlook, as these letters reveal it, was broadly human. With his air of a somewhat dandified Strindberg—I am glancing at the frontispiece of the book—he combined what might be described as a temperament of the eighteenth century. It was natural to him to write in the manner



of Pope, whom he admired prodigiously; lucidity, precision, "correctness" in style were the qualities that he most admired; he was full of the pride of individuality, absolutely fearless and utterly indifferent to public opinion; and the same man who spent so much of his energy "exploring the ways of hate," was, in his personal life, the serenest of stoics. The son of a "poor farmer" in Ohio, he had had no formal education. How did he acquire such firmness and clarity of mind? He was a natural aristocrat, and he developed a rudimentary philosophy of aristocracy which, under happier circumstances, might have made him a great figure in the world of American thought. Had he come into contact with the best current ideas in his own line, had he lived in the centre, there is no telling how far he might have gone. But America is too large, and the America of his day was too chaotic. It has remained for Mr. Mencken to develop and popularize, with more learning but with less refinement, the views that Bierce expressed in "The Shadow on the Dial."

SOME of these views appear in his letters, enough to show us how complete was his antipathy to the dominant spirit of his age. He disliked humanitarianism as much as he liked humanism, or would have liked it if he had had the opportunity. He invented the word peasant in Mr. Mencken's sense, as applied, that is, to such worthies as James Whitcomb Riley. "The world does not wish to be helped," he says. "The poor wish only to be rich, which is impossible, not to be better. They would like to be rich in order to be worse, generally speaking." His contempt for socialism was unbounded. Of literary men holding Tolstoy's views he remarks that they are not artists at all: "They are 'missionaries' who, in their zeal to lay about them, do not scruple to seize any weapon that they can lay their hands on; they would grab a crucifix to beat a dog. The dog is well beaten, no doubt (which makes him a worse dog than he was before), but note the condition of the crucifix!" All this in defence of literature and what he regards as its proper function. Of Shaw and, curiously, Ibsen, he observes that they are "very small men, pets of the drawing-room and gods of the hour"; he abhors Whitman, on the score equally of sentiment and form; and of Mr. Upton Sinclair's early hero he writes as follows:

I suppose there are Arthur Sterlings among the little fellows, but if genius is not serenity, fortitude and reasonableness I don't know what it is. One can not even imagine Shakespeare or Goethe bleeding over his work and howling when 'in the fell clutch of circumstance.' The great ones are figured in my mind as ever smiling—a little sadly at times, perhaps, but always with conscious inaccessibility to the pinpricking little Titans that would storm their Olympus armed with ineffectual disasters and popgun misfortunes. Fancy a fellow wanting, like Arthur Sterling, to be supported by his fellows in order that he may write what they don't want to read!

Bierce was consistent: his comments on his own failure to achieve recognition are all in the spirit of this last contemptuous remark. "I have pretty nearly ceased to be 'discovered,'" he writes to one of his friends, "but my notoriety as an obscurian may be said to be world-wide and apparently everlasting." Elsewhere, however, he says: "It has never seemed to me that the 'unappreciated genius' had a good case to go into court with, and I think he should be promptly non-suited. . . . Nobody compels us to make things that the world does not want. We merely choose to because the pay, *plus* the satisfaction, exceeds the pay alone that we get from work that the world does want. Then where is our grievance? We get what we prefer when we do good work; for the lesser wage we do easier work." Sombre and at times

both angry and cynical as Bierce's writing may seem, no man was ever freer from personal bitterness. If he was out of sympathy with the life of his time and with most of its literature, he adored literature itself, according to his lights. It is this dry and at the same time whole-souled enthusiasm that makes his letters so charming. Fortunate was the circle of young writers that possessed so genial and so severe a master.

ONE forms the most engaging picture of the old man "wearing out the paper and the patience" of his friends, reading to them Mr. Ezra Pound's "Ballade of the Goodly Fere." Where poetry is in question, nothing is too small to escape his attention, no day long enough for the counsel and the appreciation he has to give. "I don't worry about what my contemporaries think of me," he writes to his favourite pupil. "I made 'em think of *you*—that's glory enough for one." Every page of his book bears witness to the sincerity of this remark. Whether he is advising his "little group of gifted obscurians" to read Landor, Pope, Lucian or Burke, or elucidating some point of style, or lecturing them on the rudiments of grammar, or warning them against the misuse of literature as an instrument of "reform," or conjuring them not to "edit" their thought for somebody whom it may pain, he exemplifies his own dicta, that, on the one hand, "literature and art are about all that the world really cares for in the end," and on the other that, in considering the work of his friends, a critic should "keep his heart out of his head." Let me quote two or three other observations that are equally good:

One can not be trusted to feel until one has learned to think.

Must one be judged by his average, or may he be judged, on occasion, by his highest? He is strongest who can lift the greatest weight, not he who habitually lifts lesser ones.

A writer should, for example, forget that he is an American and remember that he is a man. He should be neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Buddhist, nor Mohammedan, nor Snake Worshipper. To local standards of right and wrong he should be civilly indifferent. In the virtues, so-called, he should discern only the rough notes of a general expediency; in fixed moral principles only time-saving predecisions of cases not yet before the court of conscience. Happiness should disclose itself to his enlarging intelligence as the end and purpose of life; art and love as the only means to happiness. He should free himself of all doctrines, theories, etiquettes, politics, simplifying his life and mind, attaining clarity with breadth and unity with height. To him a continent should not seem wide nor a century long, etc. etc.

This is evidently a "set piece"; but behind its rhetoric one discerns the feeling of a genuine humanist.

IN certain ways, to be sure, this is a rather sad book. At seventy-one Bierce set out for Mexico "with a pretty definite purpose," as he wrote, "which, however, is not at present disclosable." From this journey he never returned, nor since 1913 has any word ever been received from him. What was that definite purpose? What prompted him to undertake so mysterious an expedition? Was it the hope of exchanging death by "old age, disease, or falling down the cellar stairs" for the "euthanasia" of death in action? He had come to loathe the civilization in which he lived, and his career had been a long tale of defeat. Of journalism he said that it is "a thing so low that it can not be mentioned in the same breath with literature"; nevertheless, to journalism he had given nine-tenths of his energy. It is impossible to read his letters without feeling that he was a starved man; but certainly it can be said that, if his generation gave him very little, he succeeded in retaining in his own life the poise of an Olympian.



“Of little use to hammer cold iron.”  
—Arabian proverb.

THE political system which prevails the world over is cold iron: no amount of hammering will change its shape or form. Criticism of its personnel is futile unless it conveys a suggestion of the fallacies on which their mandate is granted. Equally futile is criticism of its methods if no adequate philosophy underlies such strictures.

What distinguishes the FREEMAN from magazines that devote themselves in whole or in part to international affairs is that it perceives not only politicians' errors but the error of politics. Its philosophy is implicit in all editorial expressions, and, upon occasion, its beliefs have been directly stated. Mainly it aspires to prompt readers to puzzle things out for themselves. The FREEMAN has put many a man and woman in the way of looking at things from the root up to the foliage, and of using brain-cells which previous periodical-reading had permitted to remain dormant.

That is the best proof that the FREEMAN is hammering hot iron.

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